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Quest 64

Forsaken

Bio F.R.E.A.K.S.

NBA Courtside

... and 54 more!

PP

Starcraft

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War Games

Battlezone

Hardball 6

Swarm

Shadow Master

Army Men

Forsaken

... and 92 more!

PLAYSTATION

Tekken 3

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MLB '99

X-Men VS Street Fighter

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PEADVENTURES

HARDWARE HEAVEN

Ten great gizmos to make your games kick ass!

BANJO KAZOOIE

Is Nintendo's latest better than Mario 64?

Find out on page 86!



NOTHING OUTRUNS THE LONG ARM OF THE LAW.

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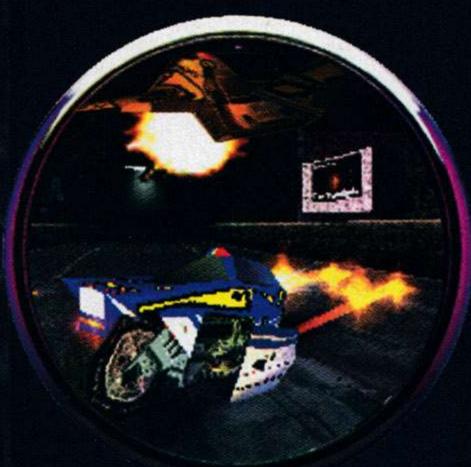






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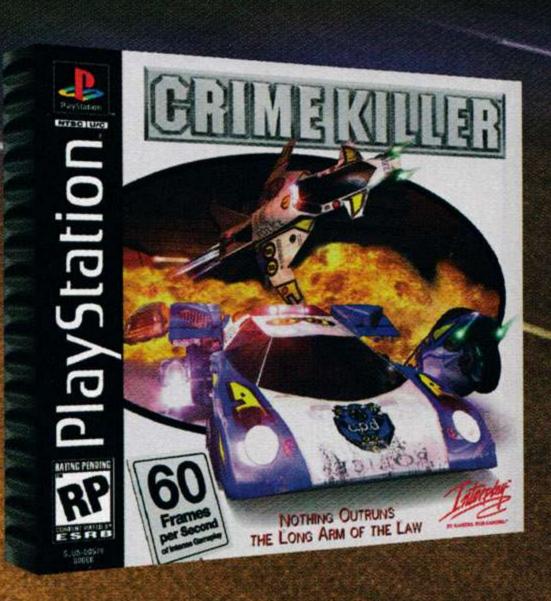
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Almost every PC and videogame release since the inception of 32 bit consoles - reviewed and updated every month!

HARDWARE 115

We rate and slate the latest gaming hardware. Will these gizmos help or hinder your gaming experience?

INCOMING......120

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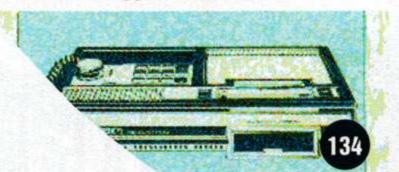
PLAYSTATION.

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PC

Ara NGC 6397 Army Men Battle Arena Toshinden 2 Battlezone Burnout **Final Fantasy VII** Forsaken Hardball 6 **High Heat Baseball** MW 2: Titanium Trilogy Might & Magic VI Monster Truck Rally 2 M1 Tank Platoon 2 Of Light And Darkness **Outwars** Shadowmaster SpecOps Starcraft

What ever happened to Coleco?



Final Fantasy VII

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Swarm

Takeru



Hardware



All Star Baseball



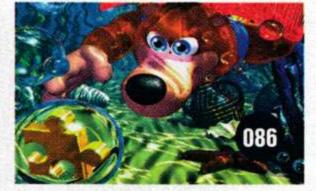
Stuff



Starcraft



Banjo Kazooie



Published in the United States of America. **Game Buyer** (ISSN 1091-1685) (USPS 006-037) is published monthly by Imagine Media, Inc.; 150 North Hill Drive; Brisbane, CA, 94005. Periodicals postage paid in Brisbane, CA and additional mailing offices. Newsstand distribution is handled by Curtis Circulation Company. Subscriptions: one year (12 issues) U.S. \$20. Canada: \$34. Canadian price includes postage and GST (GST #128220688). Foreign: \$44. CPC Int'l Pub Mail # 1195492. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to **Game Buyer**, P.O. Box 50117, Boulder, Co, 80328-0117. Since we're all about games now, starting this month, I'm gonna tell you all the story of how I created my first two videogames, Insane Asylum and The Dunwhat Harhar. Both of these games were made for the Commodore 64 and copies of them are still available for folks that have that machine. Now, where to start... Oh yeah... It was a dark and stormy night... Entire contents copyright 1998, Imagine Media, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is strictly prohibited — Imagine Media, Inc is not affiliated with the companies or products covered in **Game Buyer**. All letters received are assumed to be for publication unless marked otherwise. We reserve the right to edit such letters for reasons of space or clarity. Welcome to Game Buyer. Enjoy the ride!

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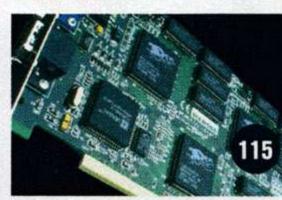
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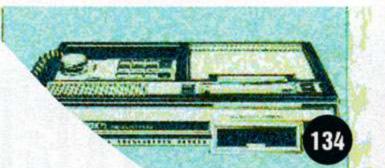
Banjo Kazooie



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WELCOME ...



Welcome one and all to the premiere issue of Game Buyer - we're glad you joined us. This magazine is brought to you from the same team that created Ultra Gameplayers. In our time with UGP, we listened to your requests, we asked for your input and we used

your ideas when we created Game Buyer. This magazine is unique - it's a magazine designed by you, the reader. Big, comprehensive reviews, with every detail explored, every facet of the game explained. At fifty bucks a game, you don't want a paragraph of ill-considered review - you want a true buyer's guide, a useful tool to aid you in your purchase. Oh, and you want an interesting, informative and entertaining read - something we take great pleasure in presenting you. So join us and share the one thing we have in common - true passion for games.

-Frank O'Connor







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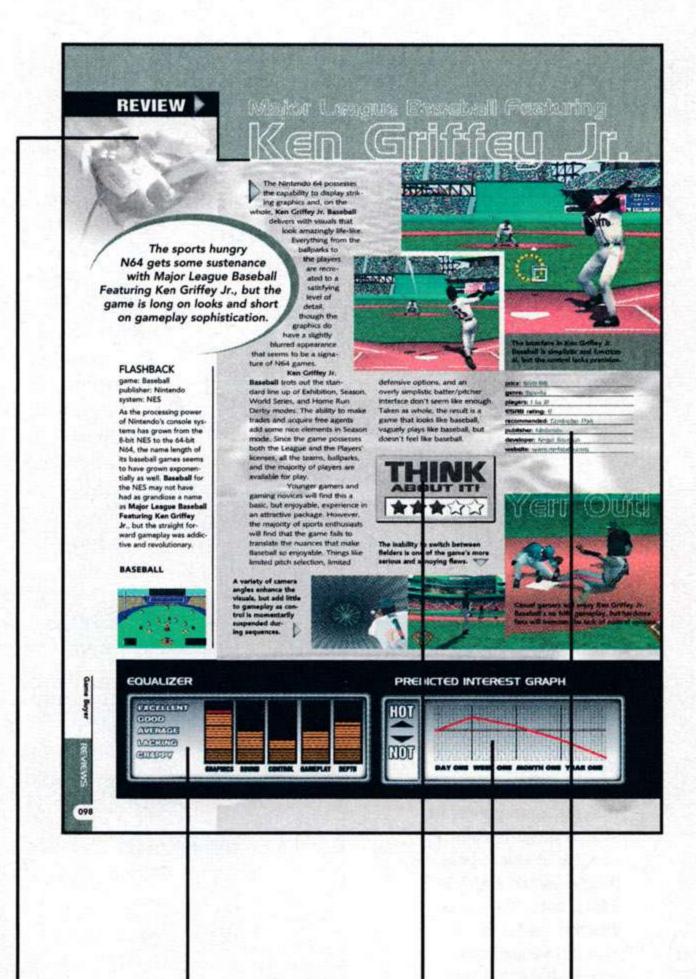
REVIEWS

The very heart of Game Buyer.

Game Buyer's review system is designed to be the most accurate, informative and entertaining - to provide you with a powerful resource, a totally accurate buyer's guide. No more guesswork, no more reliance on the biased opinion of one reviewer, but rather, a scientific, well considered and evenly opinioned masterpiece. We don't even stop at simple game reviews. Where appropriate we'll talk about prequels, development teams, even cheats to get you started. This is just the beginning.

You'll also notice that the balance between N64, PlayStation and PC will shift from month to month - and there's a very simple reason: We intend to review every game, regardless of format. This month, there are no Saturn titles rated. The reason - none were released. We'd hoped to bring you Burning Rangers, but alas, Sega delayed the launch. When Sega unveils Katana, we'll be reviewing games on that system too, so fear not gentle Sega fans, we'll be taking good care of you.

You'll also notice, scattered among our news and previews, the occasional hand held review, including Game.Com and Game Boy systems. When color Game Boy arrives later this year, you can expect to see more of those, and possibly bigger reviews. And we still want more input. Let us know what you want to see in reviews that you don't see now, we'll consider any good ideas and you'll see a lot of evolution over the coming months. Again, thanks for joining us on this maiden voyage, and without further ado, let's get on with the Reviews...



RATING STAMPS



Unreservedly reccomended. You can buy this without any fear of it sucking.



Go ahead, buy it! this is a great game. You'll have fun. It's worth the money.



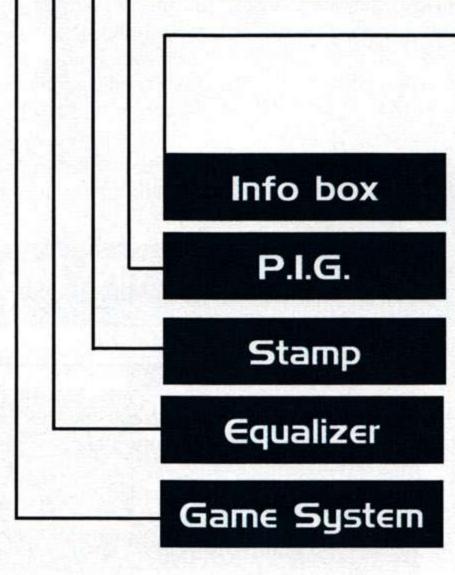
Read the review carefully. This may be worth it. Weigh the pros and cons.



By all means read why, but this game sucks, so you may as well forget it.



The pinnacle of suckage. A festering boil on the butt-cheeks of gaming.



Check at a glance who made this game, for which machine, when it's available and all that good stuff. Game Buyer is all about information.

Or Predicted Interest Graph if you prefer. We consider many factors for this: The ease of play, longevity of game, the result is a year-long graph indicating the life span of a game.

This is the money shot. Should you buy it or not? All our review information concentrated into one simple device: The Game Buyer stamp.

See at a glance how your game performs in the most important areas; gameplay, graphics, sound, depth and control. Graphically illustrated for ease of use.

It's pretty darned important to know which machine the review is based on - so we made it simple - see at a glance which format the game is running on.

REVIEW

Tekken is easily the most exciting series of games on the PlayStation. If not for the brilliant graphics, then for the drop-dead show off fighting moves and wealth of mad characters. A

Namco expects to
sell more than a million
copies of Tekken 3 - might we
suggest you add your
contribution to this massive
figure? We think you'll find it
well worth the money...

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talking. Namco has come up with the goods in spades. Tekken 3 is the best arcade to home conversion in the history of, uh... all that.

Well, graphic cutbacks have been made, but even the saddest arcade fan would be hard pressed to identify them on sight. The polygon has been dropped a

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Marshall Law's son Forest squares off against Jackie Chan lookalike Lei Wulong. Mainland China VS Hong Kong action.

System: PlayStation

Price: \$49.99
Genre: Fighting

Players: 1 or 2

ESRB rating: T (Teen)
Recommended:

Dural Shock Cou

Dual Shock Controller

Publisher: Namco

Developer: Namco

Web: www.namco.com

hiring the finest martial artists and gymnasts to supply the motion data. Their efforts have been rewarded by some of the most elaborate, realistic and visually impressive skeletons ever to grace a screen. Grabs, throws and kicks really appear to connect, and while the overblown nature of the combos and special moves may distress Virtua Fighter purists, there's no denying that the game looks cool.

continued on page 16

HEAD TO HEAD

If this gigantic love-filled review doesn't pique your interest, then maybe one of these alternatives will.

DEAD OR ALIVE

Tecmo's fighter is a straight mix of Tekken and Virtua Fighter styles, with slick, very high resolution graphics and masses of sex appeal, unless you're a girl, in which case it's a predictably sexist piece of expoitative garbage, worth little more than the contents of their ill-fitting costumes.

TEKKEN 2

Surprised? Why would we face Tekken 2 off with Tekken 3? Well, Tekken 2 still has a lot to offer, and can be picked up at a bargain price.

STREET FIGHTER COLLECTION

Street Fighter
Collection from
Capcom is an entertaining trip down
memory lane for
those who find
3D too
confusing
and modern.

Tekken 3 is the best arcade to home conversion in history.

little, and some textures have been changed, but Namco has produced a game conversion that looks almost exactly like its parent. As a matter of fact, some of the character builds look better now. thanks to smooth 'skin' stretching techniques. Tekken 3 is a pretty conventional 3D fighter at first glance, with loads of top characters, and a pretty traditional fighting move arsenal. What separates this from the vastly swollen pack is the

and the strategies this creates between characters. Even the storyline, while
hopelessly bizarre, adds atmosphere to an otherwise pointless
single player game. To drag the
series forward, while appeasing
the Tekken 2 fans, Namco has
given us the Tekken offspring sons and daughters fighting side
by side with mothers and fathers.
It's all very strange, involving
family feuds, comedy, even

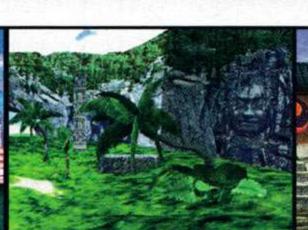
Motion capture for the game was handled in-house, and the company spared no expense in

ENRICHED ENVIRONMENTS

supernatural elements.

Namco has taken great care to make sure you feel like you're fighting in a realistic environment.









Darkstalkers 3

SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
PUBLISHER: Capcom
Release Date: September

Darkstalkers 3 marks Capcom's commitment to exposing the American gaming public to titles that may or may not be as popular Stateside as they are in Japan. Voted the most popular arcade fighting game in Japan, Darkstalkers 3 includes all the familiar characters from the original

lineup and adds four new fighters into the mix. The thematic backbone for the latest title in the series introduces Jedah, the 'Messiah of Darkness,' who is attempting to lay claim to all the various fighters' souls. Along with Jedah, other new characters include Morrigan's sister, Lilith, as well as QBee, the queen of (you guessed it) the bees, and B. B. Hood, a wee blond girl toting some serious firearms.

Darkstalkers 3 will include both a Versus and Training Mode to participate in, but the most interesting will be the Visual Story Mode which will follow each character's story as well as display some very impres-

sive **Darkstalkers** art gallery pics. The 4MB Ram cart on the Japanese Saturn gives the import version an edge over the upcoming PS domestic port, so we'll see how well it fares visually, when it arrives in stores this fall.



TIGER POCKETS HANDHELD GAMES

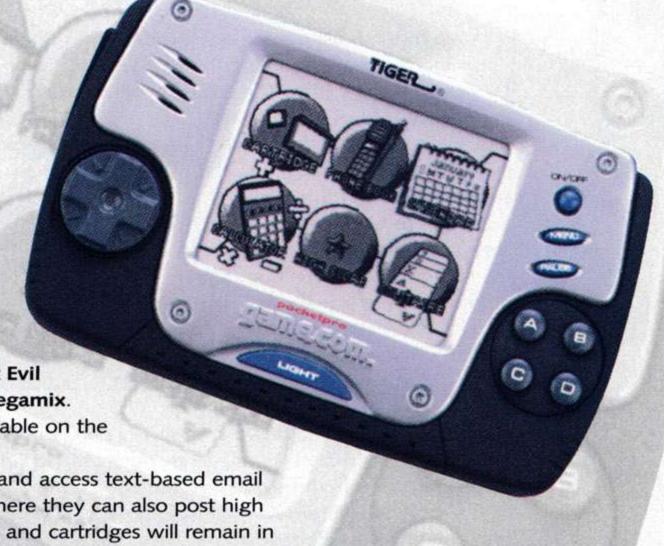
In a recent announcement, Tiger Electronics stated that they will be supporting new, smaller version of its game.com handheld gaming system, appropriately labeled the game.com.pocketpro.

Targeting more serious gaming enthusiasts with its new system,
Tiger also announced a rather impressive lineup of titles already in development for the pocketpro, which is already backwards compatible with game.com cartridges. The lineup of games includes Resident Evil

2, Holyfield Boxing, Madden '99, as well Sonic Jam and Fighter's Megamix.

Featuring a back-lit screen, it also has many of the same options available on the game.com, but now in a more compact shape.

game.com.pocketpro gamers will also be able to hook up and access text-based email services over the Internet with the use of Tiger's Internet cartridge, where they can also post high scores and download cheats. The system will retail for around \$59.95 and cartridges will remain in the \$20-30 range.



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STUNNING FMVs

The best fighting games almost always feature compelling characters and intriguing storylines. The Tekken series shines compared to its competition in presenting this information, thanks to beautifully rendered CG movies.



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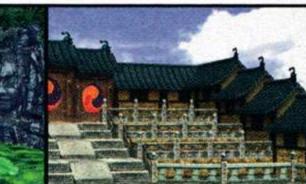
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continued from page 14

Mastering each character is a pretty Herculean task, with literally dozens of techniques per hero/villain; it's a blessing that Namco saw fit to include a training mode. The training mode shows what button combos to hit, color coding them to indicate how long the buttons should be held down. It's all very simple, but only dirty cheating bastards will actually use this feature. Real men just play it until they're damn good. Aside from the sheer number of moves, you then have to contend with defensive moves. Some characters can counter punches and kicks, turning the opponent's

Mastering each character is a pretty

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strike against him. Others

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simply isn't available in

other fighting games.

This couldn't be

more graphically amazing -

Tekken's presentation is

can create a tempo-

rary force field, mak-

ing themselves invul-



Mrs. Mokujin and Anna in a battle of the babes. Anna is cuter, but Mrs. Mokujin has a nasty 'bark'. Sorry.



Jin Kazama just got slapped around like a super King Kameamea be-atch. Serves him right.



And now look at him. Legs all broken and stuff. Kid looks like he's going home in a Tokyo Ambulance.

quite simply the best ever seen on a console game. Long, detailed, rendered intro and outro movies make fun viewing.

Namco will be stiff competition

for Pixar and the like, as its new movie development studio ramps up production

- it already has a feature in the works, possibly based on the Tekken series. The in-game graphics are just as impressive. Again, this looks just like the arcade game. Backgrounds are another big deal to Tekken spazzes. The good news is that they are crisp, sharp and detailed.

Add to this package some good (if mixed) musical themes and you have the absolute category leader. There is no better fighting game, on this system or



any other. It's clearly superior to the previous games in the series and stunning value for **Tekken** aficionados. It's all about subtlety, too. It's not like **Virtua Fighter**, where standing in a certain spot makes your punch react a bit differently. No, it's about countering a flaming death punch, pinning your opponent to the floor and breaking every bone in their body.

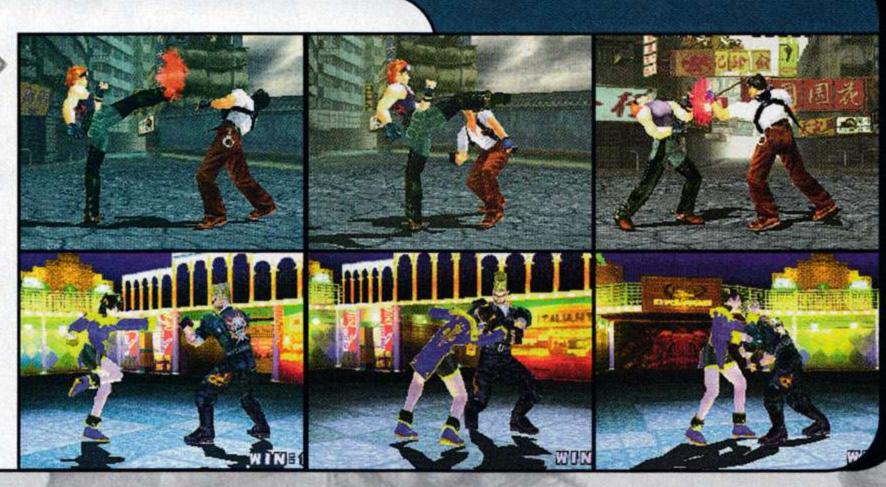
One of the cruelest new features is the after-death punishment phase. When your opponent is beaten, they stand there for a few seconds, allowing you to perform all manner of cruelty upon their hapless form. It's needless violence that only video game fans can appreciate.



The Sony dual analog control pad will become the controller of choice for Tekken 3 warriors.

DODGE CITY VS REAL TIME REVERSAL

There are two ways to avoid a kick in the spleen - one is to dodge at the last second, avoiding the blow while holding your ground and the other, which is cooler, is the reversal. Grab a punch or kick and break what you catch.



REVIEWS

Game Buyer



Snake is a cyborg and he hits really, really, really hard. More like an express train than a human being.



den Great...

THE EPIC STORY

The King of Iron Fist Tournament 2 Draws to a close. Jun Kazama comes to the stunning realization that Kazuya's supernatural strength stems from Devil. But she cannot help being drawn to him, propelled by a mystic force beyond her control.

Several days later, the final challenger arrives to face Kazuya, the organizer of the King of Iron Fist Tournament 2. In a reprise of the first Tekken Tournament, the father and son clash in a cursed blood battle.

Eventually, Heihachi emerges scarred, but victorious to regain control of the immense Mishima Conglomerate. Unaware of Devil's presence, Heihachi casts the lifeless Kazuya into a fiery volcano.

As Kazuya's body burns, the Devil appears before the pregnant Jun Kazama in a bid to enter the soul of the new life beating within her. But in a desperate struggle for the future of her child, Jun defeats Devil and retires to desolate Yakushima so as to raise Kazuya's son, Jin, alone.



Toshin, the God of War, is one of the newest playable characters in Tekken 3.

Namco's legendary rendering skills are used throughout the game. There are lots of movies to view - some of which are actually hidden - along with the characters they match.

Having regained control of the Mishima Conglomerate, Heihachi sets about to further increase his powers. He embarks on a crusade to win the trust of world leaders by putting wars and conflicts to rest. Using his immeasurable wealth, he forms Tekkenshu, a mercenary group

employed to quell conflicts efficiently. He also takes a strong interest in the well being of developing nations by helping them build agricultural systems that will sustain them.

Through Heihachi's efforts, the world appears to be regaining peace. Around fifteen years have

passed and Jin Kazama is now 15 years old.

Under Heihachi's orders, the Tekkenshu are excavating a Central American archeological site when they discover

a mysterious life form. Heihachi

orders the creature's capture, but loses contact with the Tekkenshu after a garbled radio message, '... they are all dead... Toshin (Fighting God)?!?...'

Upon arriving at the dig, Heihachi finds a field of corpses. Heihachi is wracked by sorrow, but also realizes that the power

continued on page 18

EVEN BETTER THAN THE REAL THING

Character skeletons allow realistic fights. If the kick looks like it missed, then it probably did.















continued from page 17

of the mysterious life form could be the key to his long dormant dream of world domination. To obtain this mysterious power of Toshin, and the world, Heihachi tempts the fates once again...

Within weeks, strange disappearances occur throughout the world. Persons of strong soul, masters of martial arts and other derivative fighting disciplines are reported missing... with no knowledge of their whereabouts.

Jun Kazama instinctively picks up on the dark power encroaching on her life.

She has no understanding of what it is, but senses that she has become a target. Accepting her destiny, she tells Jin everything she knows of their haunted past to prepare him for the fateful day she now feels is imminent. She tells Jin to go to his grandfather Heihachi if anything happens to her.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

1. Snake 2. Heihachi

3. Kuma

4. Lei 5. Jin

6. Paul 7. Mokujin

8. Nina

9. Xioayu

10. Gunjack 11. Eddy

12. Hwoarang

13. Julia 14. King 15. Forrest



Her intuition proves right on a cold, stormy night. Toshin comes to the mountains, bringing a chilling, swirling wind. 'Run away!' cries Jun. But against his mother's pleas, Jin opts to face Toshin and is knocked unconscious.

When Jin awakens, the house and everything around it is burned to the ground. Jin searches frantically for his mother but she is nowhere to be found. Jun has died at Toshin's hands.

Honoring her instructions, Jin goes to Heihachi and begs to be trained to in order exact revenge. Heihachi, hearing Jin's tale, is convinced that

Toshin is after the souls of powerful fighters. To attract

Toshin, Heihachi decides to host the King of Iron Fist Tournament 3.

Four years later, on Jin Kazama's 19th birthday, the curtains rise for the King of Iron Fist Tournament 3.

TEKKEN FORCE MODE

Groovy side scrolling beat 'em up, very much like Final Fight. You can use any selectable character as you battle a bunch of generic Ninja funboys and their level bosses (other Tekken 3 characters).

THEATER MODE

The Theater Mode allows you to play the rendered movies at will. This mode also allows you to load movies from your old **Tekken 2** disc and view them at leisure.

Tekken 3 has a story line that's as convoluted as any modern day soap opera, full of fury and violence.

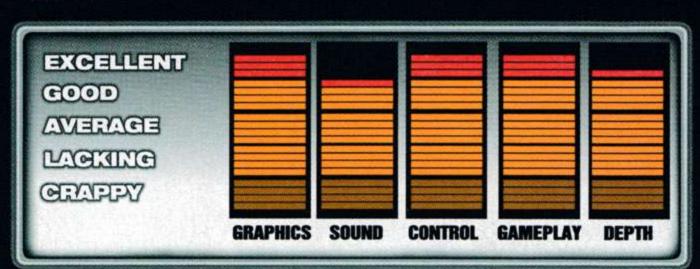
TEKKEN BALL

An insane volleyball sim with equally insane violence. Pick a **Tekken** character and start batting that ball across the center line. It's a short, sweet added attraction at best. Ironically better than any other console volleyball game, though.



DOCTOR B. GON

EQUALIZER



PREDICTED INTEREST GRAPH





SECOND

OPINION

Although Gran Turismo is

clearly the best racing game on PlayStation,

there are a couple of

small complaints. The

first is that the visuals

amazing replay mode.

This looks so good that

when you go back to the

normal gameplay, every-

thing seems just a little

ordinary. Gran Turismo

switches to hi-res mode

for replays and a cheat

exists that allows you to play one level in this res-

olution. Its a shame that

you can't select this

involved, but these

the sequel.

from the outset. There are technical difficulties

should be resolved for

the best cars are still

pretty ordinary. A Dodge

like Lamborghini's Diablo

Viper is nice, but what

about real supercars,

VT, or Ferrari's F355?

than commuter cars. It

would be nice to see buses, motorcycles or

even police cars for a

Ultra Gameplayers Online

little relief.

There's more to life

It's also strange that

are kind of ruined by the

standard in race games.

takes to appeal to Joe

American Public?

A crown that Namco once owned

this: does Gran Turismo have what it

GiranTurismo

Gran Turismo does fall into the most over-populated field of video games - driving. Right now there are so many driving games available on the PlayStation, Sony unleashes the new it defies belief.

Surprisingly though, there are very few truly good ones. Gran has been stolen. The real question is Turismo is an exception to that rule. We can say, confidently, at the beginning of this review, that Gran

> Turismo is simply the best racing game ever developed for a home system. Only a couple of arcade games, with powerful technology and motion control, can even hope to achieve the same level of detail, realism

> Detail and options aside, the greatest attribute Gran Turismo possesses is gameplay. Although the control changes distinctly from vehicle to vehicle, it's very clear from the outset that handling is tight, responsive and as far as possible, realistic. Each vehicle over or understeers just like the real thing. Learning the limits of the controller and the cars will take weeks.

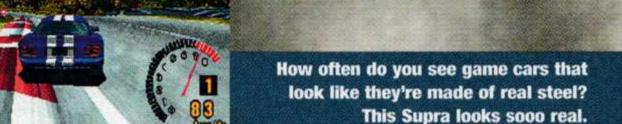
> Gran Turismo allows for conventional time trials, races, of the most interesting features

and fun.

This is the product of Sony's Japanese 'Polys' team, and the care and attention lavished on it is obvious. The game is based largely around Touring and Sports cars, all of them available to consumers, ranging from Honda's diminutive Del Sol, to Dodge's delirious Viper GT. The sheer range of cars available is almost overwhelming.

Although the cars will crash, it's impossible to make them flip, although this is a feature that will be looked at for the sequel. A built-in cheat allows the player to play a level in a unique high resolution mode, something which adds a spark of impetus to complete the game, as well as showing off the upper limit of the PlayStation's abilities.

even head to head play, but one is a long, strategy based man-



In 'License' mode, the slightest error will have you disqualified.

Complete

H HONDA GAMELIER

agement run. Basically, you start off with a crappy little car (no offense, Honda) and try to earn money on world racing circuits to improve your lot. A garage allows you to customize your car, adding features and adjusting

continued on page 22

System: Sony PlayStation

Price: \$49.99

Genre: Racing

Players: I or 2

ESRB rating: KA

Web: www.scea.com

Recommended: Analog Controller

Publisher: SCEA

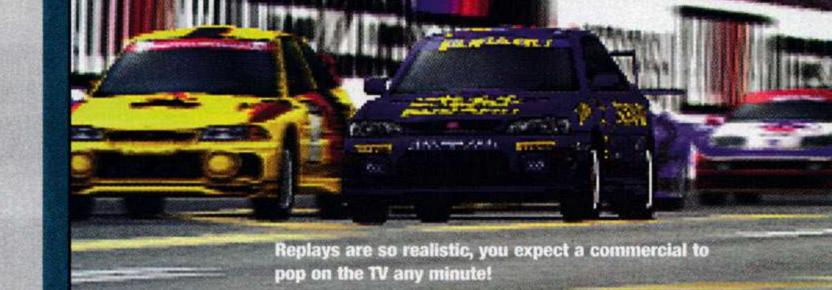
Developer: Polys



Decais are all mapped perfectly onto the car models and reflect light perfectly. Real sponsors, too.



Powersliding must be mastered, but this is like a real car, so steer into the skid and take your foot off the gas.



Game Buyer

REVIEWS

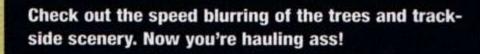


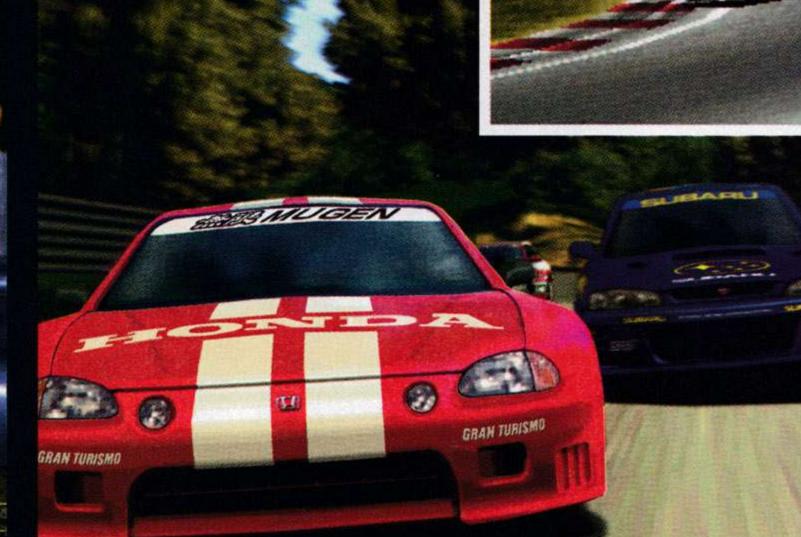


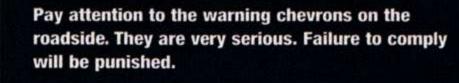




It's hard to believe you're looking at a video game! It's almost like you have a track-side seat at Laguna Seca! What a rush!







TO SECULE FOR

SECOND

OPINION

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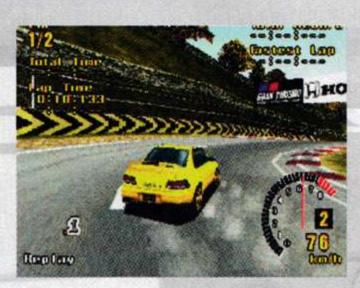
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Gran Turismo allows for conventional time trials, races, even head to head play, but one of the most interesting features is a long, strategy based manATTRISMO WHONDA GRANTINISM How often do you see game cars that look like they're made of real steel? This Supra looks sooo real.

In 'License' mode, the slightest error will have you disqualified.

agement run. Basically, you start off with a crappy little car (no offense, Honda) and try to earn money on world racing circuits to improve your lot. A garage allows you to customize your car, adding features and adjusting

continued on page 22



System: Sony PlayStation

Recommended: Analog Controller

Price: \$49.99

Genre: Racing

Players: I or 2

ESRB rating: KA

Publisher: SCEA

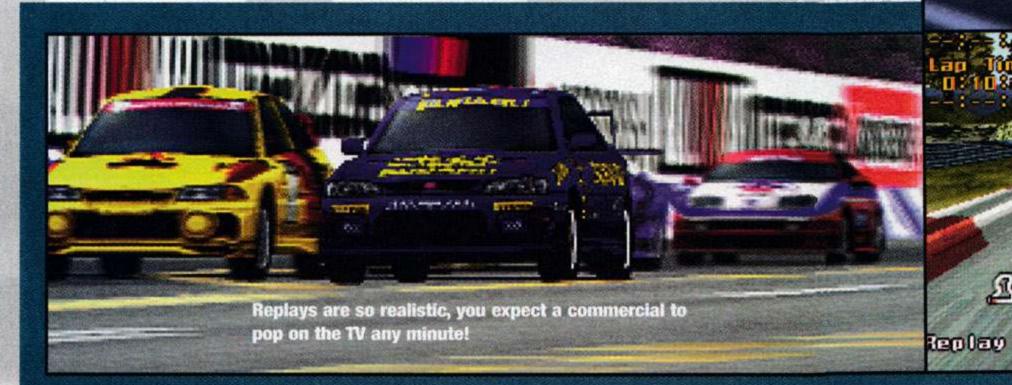
Developer: Polys

Web: www.scea.com

Powersliding must be mastered, but this is like a real car, so steer into the skid and take your foot off the gas.



Decals are all mapped perfectly onto the car models and reflect light perfectly. Real sponsors, too.





Check out the speed blurring of the trees and trackside scenery. Now you're hauling ass! It's hard to believe you're looking at a video game! It's

almost like you have a track-side seat at Laguna

Seca! What a rush!





Pay attention to the warning chevrons on the roadside. They are very serious. Failure to comply will be punished.









continued from page 20

decals, but really, you have a continuing quest to buy a bigger, faster car.

Ironically, bigger isn't always better. The Viper may be fast, but it tends to spin out, so often a smaller car will improve your race times.

The most glorious visual aspect of Gran Turismo is the lighting used on the cars. They look, well, shiny. Clever programming adds moving highlights to the texture maps of the cars, making them look absolutely real. This lighting changes depending on the angle you view the car, or if you enter a tunnel, or even weather changes.

Interview with Kazunori Yamauchi

Game Buyer: What inspired you to create the game?

I first came up with the idea when I was 15. There were many racing games available then, but none of them featured the type of cars that normal, every day people could go out and buy. I wanted to create a game that allowed people to race cars that they saw in every day life.

Game Buyer: How long was Gran Turismo in development?

Six years from the submission of my game design to the time it shipped.

Game Buyer: Is there any connection between Gran Turismo and your previous project, Motor **Toon Grand Prix?**

Yes. Gran Turismo evolved from the hidden grand prix racing game in Motor Toon Grand Prix.

Game Buyer: Did you drive actual GT cars in order to get the physics models for the game just right?

I drove 30 of the cars found in the game. For those I wasn't able to drive, I started out with one base physics model and added their individual attributes to create specific cars. I wasn't sure if they handled just like the real

THERE'S MORE TO LIFE THAN JUST RACING...

Management features in **Gran Turismo are simple to** navigate and add a great deal of depth to an otherwise simplistic racer. Making your way through leagues, licenses and other modes is tough.





Turismo, poses with his super-soupedup Lancer.

Kazunori Yamauchi, the creator of Gran

American and European cars. I will consider as many as possible for the sequel. Also, I would like to optimize the physics and implement the ability to flip over and spin more realistically. I would also like to create a 'crash test' mode.

and lawyers, I went into the computer field. Game Buyer: Any thoughts on



their feedback. the sequel?

Game Buyer: Just how far is Gran Turismo pushing the PlayStation's capabilities?

things until the game shipped

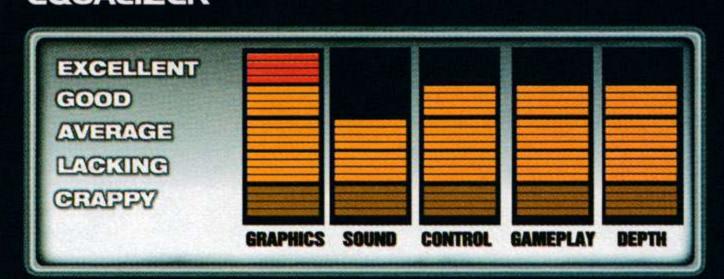
and gamers started sending in

The game uses approximately 75% of PlayStation's power. 50% of the hardware is being used for the physics model alone.

Game Buyer: did you have any specific goals with the game?

Realism. I wanted to create filmlike replays, something which hadn't been done before. I made films in school, and when all of my friends went on to pursue more 'traditional' careers such as doctors

EQUALIZER



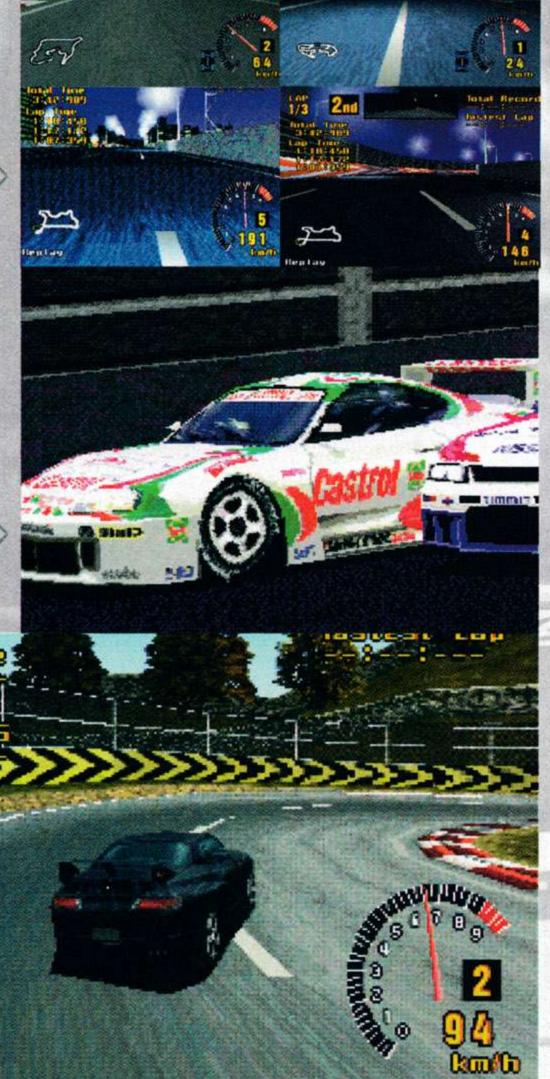
Dual Shocker - Gran Turismo screams for analog

Although Gran Turismo has been brilliantly implemented, this is a clear candidate for analog control. Using the Japanese version of the game with the new 'Dual Shock' controller makes the game more responsive, more subtle and more fun.

GT SHOWS HOW TO FEEL REAL

The first person
perspective mode
is not only more
realistic, but actually faster - and by
quite a margin.
This is because the
PlayStation has
less polygons to
draw. It's an effect
found in most
racing games.

When cars
collide, the physics
model reflects what
would happen in
real life - but without damaging the
vehicle. They will
spin off, but you can
also use a rival car
to cushion
an impact.



PREDICTED INTEREST GRAPH





If you can't get your head round the GT cars, there are plenty of other racers out there. These are the three best.

Formula One '97

Psygnosis addressed and fixed many of the problems with this Formula One simulation. The result is a faster, better and graphically brilliant game. Music is atrocious and should be immediately turned off. The lack of realism in crashes is still a concern, but not a great one.



This is Namco's attempt (confusingly) to port Rave Racer to the
PlayStation. It's a very successful
attempt. Rage Racer is very much
an arcade game, and may not
appeal to simulation fans. Graphics
however, are as slick as anything
else on PlayStation and compare
favorably with Gran Turismo.

Jet Moto 2

Another Sony product, via the good folks at Single Trac (who also programmed Warhawk and Twisted Metal). This is similar to Nintendo's Wave Race, but with lots and lots of tracks. If you like racing, but not simulation, then the surreal, arcade inspired gameplay should appeal.



Psygnosis presents a real cross between arcade and technical racing in Formula One.



Rage Racer is about twitching your way through courses at high speed. Cool stuff.



Jet Moto throws out all the rules and puts you in an unrealistic, but fun environment.

BOOSTER

There are plenty of hidden secrets in **Gran Tourismo** - here are a couple to strive for. There are hidden cars and the only way to unlock them is to win gold medals on each of the three license categories. It will take WEEKS.

DUH!

So, you accidentally erased your **Gran Turismo** saves while greedily copying those of your friend Bob, eh? Well, in future, you might like to try this tip instead of simply cursing your luck. As soon as you delete the saved game, simultaneously press R1, R2, L1, and L2 and, if you did it correctly/quickly enough, the icon will reappear! Unfortunately, if you don't press the buttons immediately after deletion, or enter the commands incorrectly, the data will be lost forever. This code was originally printed in the Japanese PlayStation manual, but they took it out since it's almost (but not quite) completely useless.

BIT PWR

OUT D

Baseball games on the
PlayStation have traditionally
been a hit or miss affair.
Always with enough gameplay
goodness for a hit, but
consistently missing the
essence of the game.

Every year, the boys of summer take the field in hopes of dethroning last year's champs. This year, Sony finds its field of dreams.

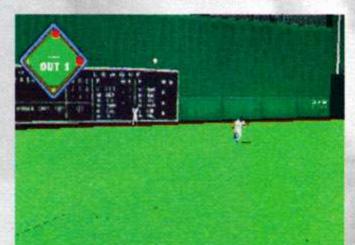
Invariably,
the Triple
Play-series
has been
the big
fish in an
imperfect
pond while
the superb

World Series
Baseball series withered on the much ignored
Sega Saturn.

Sony looked to change that pecking order this year and for the most part it has succeeded. The graphics in MLB '99 are the best yet for the series. The players still lack a little in detail and realism, but for the first time they move smoothly. The fact that the game has 200 personalized batting stances shows how far Sony went to sweat the details.

A plethora of features also distinguish MLB '99. In addition to the obligatory Exhibition,

Even with five dynamic camera perspectives the action can seem a little distant in MLB '99, but the graphics have made great strides.



Season, Playoff, and Home Run Derby modes, there is also spring training and a draft feature.

'99 succeeds for the most part thanks to its Total Control Batting and Fielding features, which allow for a satisfying level of control.

Where MLB '99 is lacking is in the details of the game engine. Sony seems to have paid a bit more attention

to the game's features than how it works, and it shows. Although not abundant, enough of those moments crop up in the course of gameplay to diminish the experience from excellent to good.



System: PlayStation

Price: \$44.99
Genre: Sports
Players: I or 2

ESRB rating: E (Everyone)
Recommended: Memory card

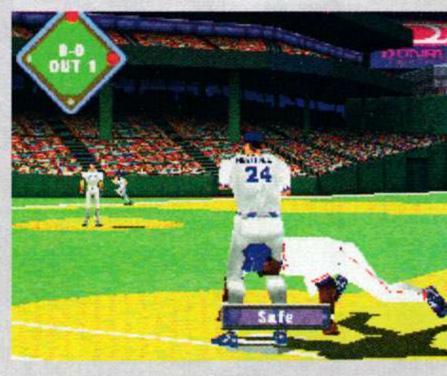
Total Control Passing transformed NFL Gameday, and Sony looks to do the

same with Total Control Batting and

Total Control Fielding for MLB '99.

Publisher: Sony

Developer: Sony Int. Studios Web: www.playstation.com



MLB '99 isn't without its problems and compared to World Series Baseball '98 on the Saturn, it is lacking, but on the PlayStation, MLB is the champ.

as the best baseball game for the PlayStation.

TRIPLE PLAY '99

HEAD TO HEAD

TRIPLE PLAY '99

SYSTEM: PlayStation

EA's sports line-up has

house and Triple Play

line-up. But despite

been a perennial power-

has always been one of

the crown jewels of the

steady yearly improve-

ments, there are a still flaws and inaccuracies

that are unforgivable.

exceeds TP '99 in terms

MLB '99 matches or

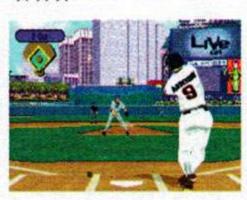
of graphics, features, and gameplay. Couple

that with less glaring

design flaws and MLB

'99 assumes the crown

PUBLISHER: EA



EQUALIZER

EXCELLENT GOOD AVERAGE LACKING CRAPPY GRAPHICS SOUND CONTROL GAMEPLAY DEPTH

PREDICTED INTEREST GRAPH



REVIEWS



BIOP REAKS

Combining elements from
War Gods and the Mortal
Kombat series, Bio
F.R.E.A.K.S. is Midway's latest
attempt at conquering the
fighting game genre.

After the dismal release of War Gods, Midway is finally back on track with its latest and somewhat innovative 3D brawler - Bio F.R.E.A.K.S.

Bio F.R.E.A.K.S.
features a
cast of ten
playable
characters, two
of which
are hidden,
ranging
from a beauti-

hunter to gruesome synthoids. By using a process called soft-skin texture mapping, Midway was able to create complex polygonal models for each fighter without any seams. Fighting is executed via the usual four-button Mortal Kombat

layout, but there is an additional button used for firing projectile weapons. Unfortunately, Midway decided to stick with the infamous dial-a-combo system, so button mashers out there should be pretty happy. The characters are also quite balanced and responsive.

Put it all together and BIO

F.R.E.A.K.S. is a very solid attempt at a quality fighter. The game's unique use of 3D arenas, coupled with the ability for characters to fly around, provides a freedom of movement not seen before in this

Bio F.R.E.A.K.S. features some of the most highly detailed and realistic looking polygonal characters ever seen on the

PlayStation.



LUCK ON SHIPTOF 1 - 75

Some of the characters appear to have escaped from a Ghostbusters movie.

System: PlayStation

ESRB rating: M (Mature)

Publisher: Midway Home Ent.

Recommended: Joystick

Web: www.midway.com

Price: \$54.99

Genre: Fighting

Players: | or 2

Developer: Saffire

Following in the footsteps of War Gods and Mortal Kombat, this game features plenty of blood and gore.

> genre. Add in the infamous blood and gore, and you have a slightly simplistic, but fun, title that fighting fans will want to check out.



The defensive capabilities also include the use of shields.

Hitting the L1 button activates your character's jetpack, allowing them to fly around the arena for limited amounts of time.

has made Bio F.R.E.A.K.S. what War

FLASHBACK

PUBLISHER: Midway

SYSTEM: PlayStation

Midway's first attempt

at a '3D' fighting game

Unfortunately, the game

extremely poorly. It fea-

tured plenty of gore, but

keep players interested.

designs lacked imagina-

tion and were quite dull to look at. Fortunately,

didn't have any truly innovative elements to

Even the character's

Midway has learned

from its mistakes and

Gods should have been.

was War Gods.

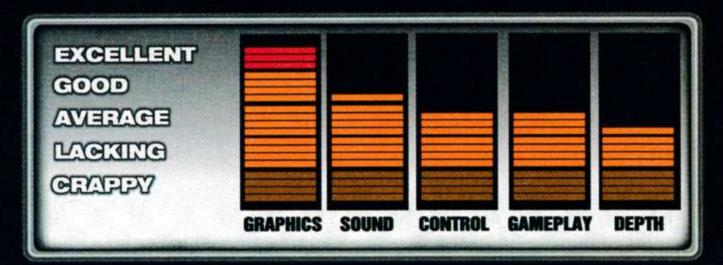
looked and played

WAR GODS

Home



EQUALIZER



PREDICTED INTEREST GRAPH



REVIEWS

166 CARS, 11 TRACKS, 1 CHECKERED FLAG

Think you're a good driver? Put your skills to the test with Gran Turismo – the most challenging and realistic driving game ever designed for the PlayStation game console. Real racing pales in comparison.





RACE 166 DIFFERENT CARS

Redline a Corvette, power an RX7 through a wicked "S" turn or catch air in a Subaru wagon (after you've dropped the kids off at soccer practice, of course). Fact is, with over 160 vehicles from 10 world-class auto manufacturers, we could go on and on. Because no other game offers as many cars as Gran Turismo. Period.

GO HEAD-TO-HEAD

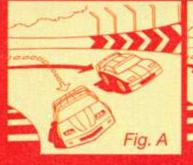


9

Bragging rights are on the line. Go head-to-head with your friends in a production car or one you've modified yourself. The action is just as fast. The victory is twice as sweet.

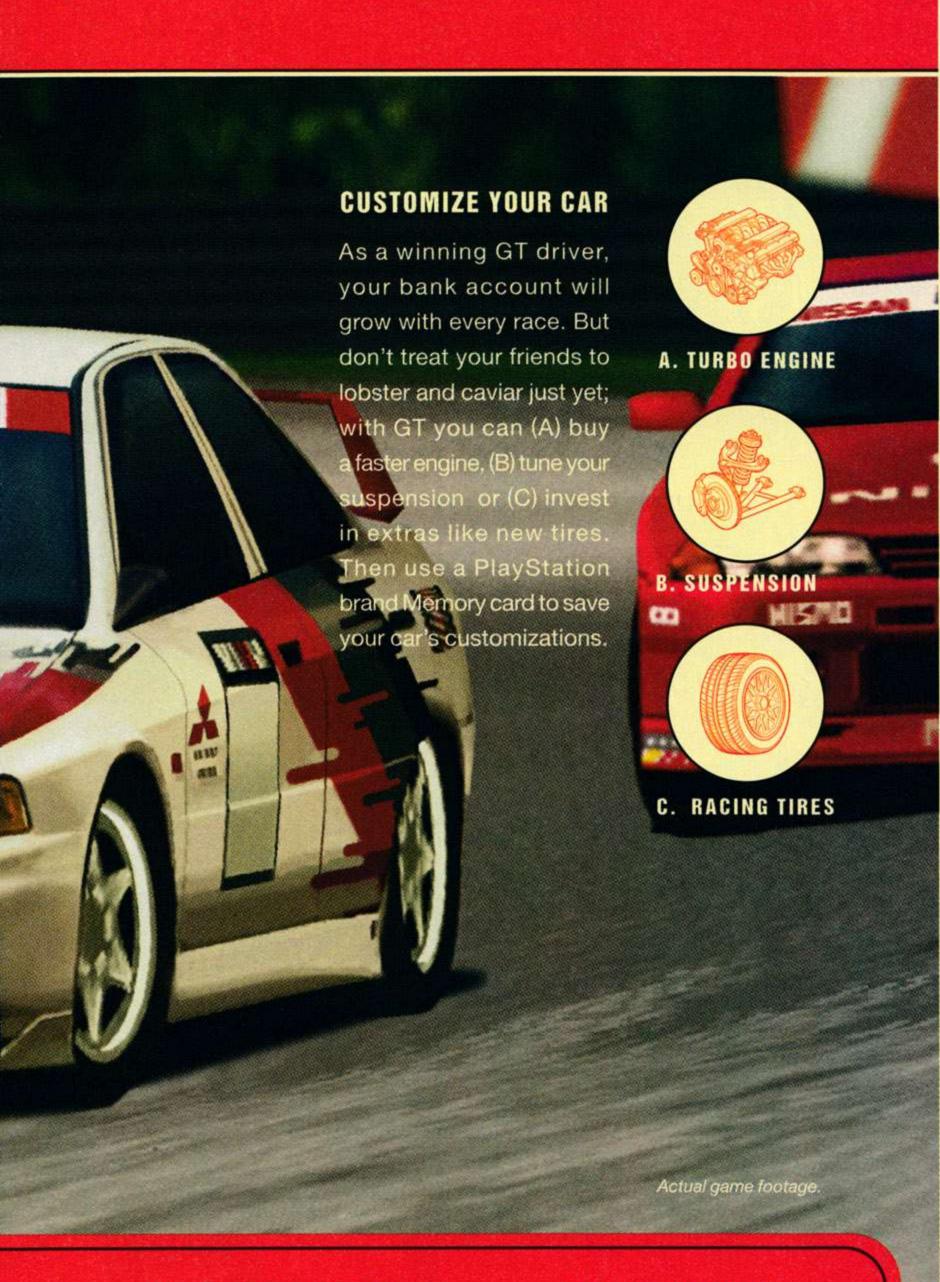
OVERTAKING

To rule the turns, (A) take a late apex and use your exit speed to pass on the inside. To protect a lead, (B) try a defensive line that keeps your opponent in the rearview mirror.









UPGRADE YOUR SYSTEM

The Dual Shock Analog Controller

brings the jumps, skid-outs and

crashes of competition to life. It's

the closest you can get to real rac-

ing without strapping on a seat belt.

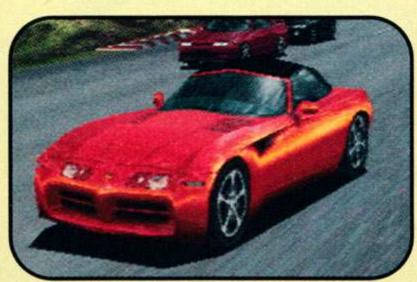
AHHHH, WINNING

Relive your victories again and again with a replay mode that's like having your own personal highlight film. You'll think you've crashed and gone to heaven.





www.playstation.com









THE RACE IS ON.



Capcom's home conversion of X-Men vs. Street Fighter is far from arcade-perfect, but still manages to provide both

Capcom has always done a remarkable job porting its arcade hits over to the PlayStation, especially considering that the console was not really designed with 2D games in mind. However, as the years go by and the arcade hardware gets more fun and addictive gameplay. powerful, accu-

rate home conversions are becoming extremely difficult to pull off. This is a fact that Capcom had to deal with when developing the PlayStation version of X-Men vs. Street Fighter. X-Men vs.

Street Fighter uses the same

basic fighting engine found in X-Men and Marvel

jumps and flashy special moves are all here. There are a total of 17 different characters to choose from, including the ever-popular

attempt some of the flashier special moves, such as the Team-Up Attacks or Team Counters. This can be somewhat frustrating, especially when you are trying to pull off that difficult mega-hit combo and the game

starts to move like molasses. Regardless of how bad these prob-

lems may be, however, they still pale in comparison to the one major downfall that this home conversion of X-Men vs. Street Fighter suffers from. Due to the memory limitations of the console, it was not possible for Capcom to include the coveted tag-team mode. For those not familiar with the game, the tagteam mode allowed players to select two different characters and then freely switch between them during fights. Whichever character was not being used would slowly gain back their health. This added a bit of strategy to the game, separating it from the vast myriad of 2D fighters out there.

The PlayStation version of the game still allows you to choose two characters to fight Even the older characters, such as Dhalsim, have been improved upon and given more powerful special moves. Flame on!



X-Men vs. Street Fighter features a cast of 17 characters, a few of which have never been seen before.



Just like in X-Men and Marvel Superheroes, you can perform superjumps by hitting all three kick buttons or by tapping down and then up on the directional pad.



The training mode is the best way to learn all those new special moves and combos.

HEAD TO HEAD

STREET FIGHTER EX **PLUS ALPHA PUBLISHER: Capcom SYSTEM: PlayStation**

With the release of Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha, Capcom proved to the world that they could create a very competent polygonal fighting game. The action was fastpaced and the special moves had all the flash that Street Fighter fans have grown to love. The game looked especially good on the PlayStation, thanks to the console's ability to push polygons, and was virtually arcade-perfect, a fact that could not be said of X-Men vs. Street Fighter. Perhaps Capcom should focus more of its time in developing other 3-D fighters. After all, that is what the PlayStation does best.

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA



Superheroes, so the super-

In a genre that has yet to fully establish its gameplay parameters, Battlezone brings a number of innovative features to the table.

Akuma, so players should have no problems finding someone they like.

Character animations are a little rough and jumpy though, lacking some of that cartoon-like smoothness of past Street Fighter ports. This is quite noticeable when playing as the larger characters, like Juggernaut. There is also quite a bit of slowdown whenever both characters

System: PlayStation Price: \$54.99

Genre: Fighting Players: I or 2

ESRB rating: T (TEEN)

Recommended: SF Collection Publisher: Capcom

Developer: Capcom Web: www.capcom.com

028

Ever since Super Street Fighter II Turbo, Akuma has appeared in virtually every Capcom game. To play as Akuma in X-Men vs. Street Fighter, all you have to do is move the Character Select cursor to the top row of characters and then tap up. Akuma will then appear and can be used in any mode in the game.



with, but the second character only makes an appearance when you execute a Tag-Team Super Move or Counter. Other than that, you would never know that they were there. Basically, the game now plays a lot like an modified version of

Marvel Superheroes.

Luckily, when Capcom must take something out of a game, it normally manages to add something else that is cool. This time, the combo system was enhanced.

Super Combo moves can now be linked together ala Street **Fighter EX Plus** Alpha. For example, Ryu's Super Fireball can be immediately followed by his Super Hurricane Kick. What this results in is some seriously long and powerful combos. In fact, Capcom has made linking moves much, much easier to pull off, which brings



looking combos. This can be good or bad, depending on what sort of fighting games you like, but still doesn't add enough to the game to counterbalance the loss of the Tag-Team mode.

I just hope that Capcom has learned its lesson. There are some games that simply should not be brought home until the console

> systems are powerful enough to handle them. Still, as it is, X-

> > vs.
> > Street
> > Fighter can
> > be a fun and
> > addicting
> > title. It just
> > lacks some



There is simply no better feeling than killing your opponent with one of your Super Combos, and seeing that bright orange flash of light.

of that high level
of quality we have come to
expect from
Capcom. If you
must have every
Street Fighter
game, then pick
this one up, too.
Strait-laced Street
Fighter fans, however,
might want to wait and
save their money for SF
Collection: Volume 2.



TAG-TEAM MADNESS

While you can not switch characters during a fight, your teammate will still help out at certain times.





EQUALIZER

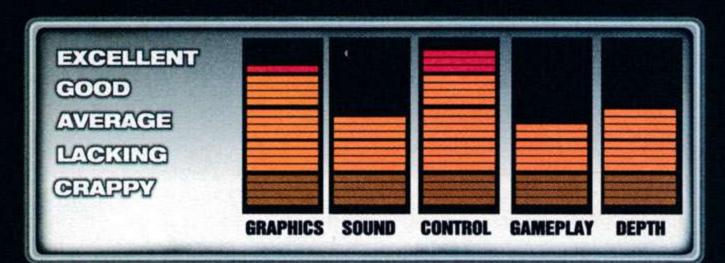
the learning curve

way down. Now

everyone can

easily pull off

impressive-



PREDICTED INTEREST GRAPH



Game Buyer

REVIEWS







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throws

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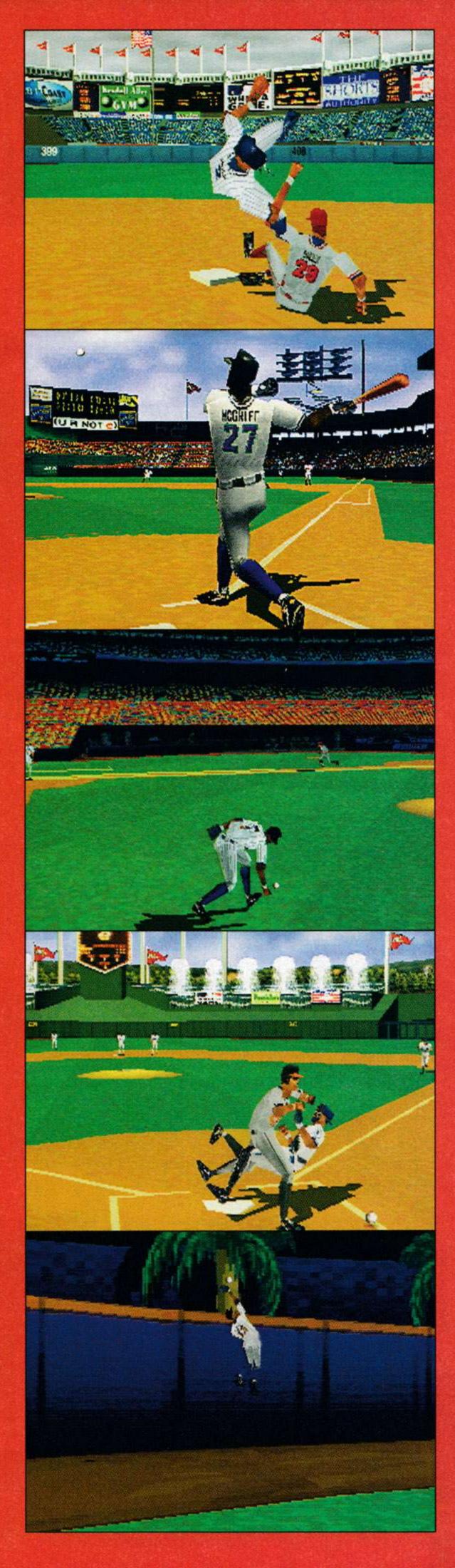
batting stance

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San Francisco NUSh

Midway finally delivers a PlayStation version of San Francisco Rush, but those expecting the same game are going to be very disappointed in this conversion.

System: PlayStation Price: \$49.99 Genre: Racing Players: | or 2 ESRB rating: E (Everyone) Recommended: Memory card Publisher: Midway Home Ent.

Developer: Climax Ent Web: www.midway.com



Head to Head

SAN FRANCISCO RUSH **PUBLISHER: Midway** SYSTEM: N64

Want it done right? Go right to the source. Atari **Games itself handled the** beautiful Nintendo 64 port of San Francisco Rush, and aside from the graphics downgrade, the game felt and played ust like its arcade c terpart. What's more, the three tracks designed specifically for the N64 game were converted for the arcade sequel, Rush: The Rock.

SF RUSH ****



San Francisco Rush on the PlayStation may look like the arcade game and sound like the arcade game, but this game plays nothing like the original. It's almost like Midway simply wanted to capitalize on the namesake without delivering any of the elements that made the arcade game unique and fun to play.

The original concept of San Francisco Rush was to race, at top speed, through streets based around true-life landmarks of San Francisco. Unfortunately, while the PlayStation version retains the looks, it fails to include the entertaining, albeit wildly exaggerated, physics model that made for the spectacular jumps, spins, and crashes that are the trademark of the arcade game. Without it, the

San Francisco Rush's charm is in finding and utilizing hidden shortcuts, like this tunnel that bypasses the dangerous city hills.

game is reduced to a boring, almost uneventful race around the city.

Though they're supposed to

each of the cars handle

almost identically.

be suited for four skill levels,

The game also features a two player split-screen mode, but not much thought was put into it. The top player is totally handicapped due to the fact that all the race information is crammed at the top of the screen.

Gamers who have never played the arcade version will probably never miss the PlayStation's omissions, but with-

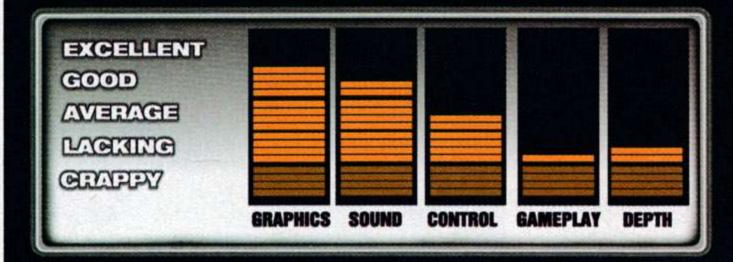
If you've ever visited San Francisco, you may recognize a few of the city's key landmarks, such as **Lombard Street.**

out the elements that made the arcade game an awesome racer, the PlayStation game is a poor conversion that should be avoided by anyone who's ever put a quarter in the original machine.





EQUALIZER



PREDICTED INTEREST GRAPH





FOISAIKEN

A desolate Earth
sets the scene for some
intense 3D action, as
Forsaken becomes the
spiritual successor to the
classic Descent.

on Earth has been destroyed. All that remains are the electronic defense systems of old, and a whole lot of money. The player's 'job' is to fly a hoverbike through the labyrinthine caverns of the former Earth, gathering up all of the wealth. Unfortunately, besides the large array of robotic defenses, there is also the matter of competing

It is the year 2113 and all life

Forsaken takes the 3D tunnel shooting that was pioneered in Descent and updates it. First of all, the graphics have received a major upgrade. Descent's gray hallways and tunnels have all been replaced by beautiful environments that are lit by a variety of light sources. Level and mission design are both excellent, with huge levels that have

with a number of other rival bikers.



System: PlayStation

Price: \$49.94

Genre: Shooter

Players: | or 2

ESRB rating: M (Mature)

Recommended: Dramamine

Publisher: Acclaim Ent.

Developer: Probe Ent.

Web: www.acclaimnation.com

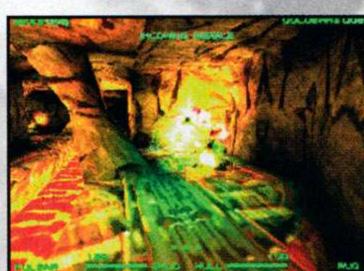
enough architectural variety for easy navigation and a variety of different mission objectives.

The level architecture is well done and believable and recognizable landmarks

Control is tight, if complex. Due to the full 360-degrees freedom of movement that is offered, use of all of the buttons on the controller is mandatory. The game's graphics move smoothly, so there is never a moment where the player feels any difficulty in maintaining control.

Other than an absolutely boring two player mode and an irritating habit of far too many effects on the screen covering up the actual

There are several different bikers to choose from - each particularly suited to different playing styles.



action, **Forsaken** is a heck of a lot of fun and definitely worth checking out.

CHO.





Every environment is liberally filled with things that can kill you.

Everything you could possible think of has a special effect (or four) associated with it.

will be blown away by Forsaken.

Forsaken. If you thought Descent was fun, you

HEAD TO HEAD

DESCENT MAXIMUM

PUBLISHER: Interplay

The original Descent and

its followup were combined in the PlayStation

version of Descent

Maximum. While the

and delivered some

nitely shows its age

against Forsaken. The

biggest difference, is that despite its inferior

much choppier than

graphics, Descent runs

game was loads of fun

intense 3D action, it defi-

DESCENT MAXIMUM

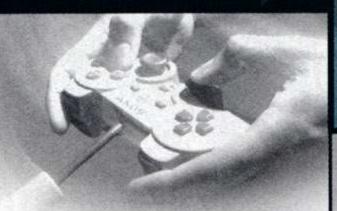
★★★



EQUALIZER

EXCELLENT GOOD AVERAGE LACKING CRAPPY GRAPHICS SOUND CONTROL GAMEPLAY DEPTH





Jeremy McGrath Super Cross '98

A great rider, a great sport and a brave try at motorbike simulation on the PlayStation, so what exactly went

wrong with Super Cross 98?

Motorcycles often suffer at the hands of programmers. With a couple of noteable exceptions (Enduro Racer from Sega and Road Rash from EA) the conversion

from real life
motorcycle spills
and thrills to
gaming simulation is a bad
one. It's hard to
replicate the
feeling of speed
and danger that
comes from clinging
to a noisy gasolinefilled deathtrap.

Super Cross 98 is a

brave try. Featuring Jeremy
McGrath, the seven-time AMA
Motocross champ and three bike
classes (80cc, 125cc and 250cc)
the game certainly has depth.
Add to that the excellent track
editor (you can create and save
up to 25 unique home-made circuits) and you have what seems
to be the perfect Motocross simulation. Or at least it would be if
the graphics and control didn't
stink so horribly.

Twitchy and unpleasant, the gameplay involves more airtime than racing and instead of being thrilling, it tends to remove you from any feeling of immersion. There are a lot of

good points in this game, but not enough to compensate for the problems.

motocross game.





The two player mode has to be one the best features in Jeremy McGrath Super Cross '98.



This game's CG intro is the only part of Jeremy McGrath that looks like a

Gamers can improve their track time by racing their toughest opponent - themseleves.

You look really stupid if you do this during a race, but the fans will think you're way cool.

System: PlayStation

Price: \$49.99
Genre: racing
Players: I or 2

ESRB rating: € (€veryone)

Recommended: Analog controller
Publisher: Acclaim Sports

Developer: Probe

Web: www.acclaim.com

MOTO RACER GP

ALTERNATIVELY...

If you're still seeking

PlayStation, but you

want a little more for

Electronic Arts' Moto Racer GP. Moto Racer

your dollar, we suggest

may not have all the fea-

tures that appeared in

Jeremy McGrath, but it

ics, tighter gameplay,

and a flawless 30 frames

Jeremy McGrath, even if

per second. In a sen-

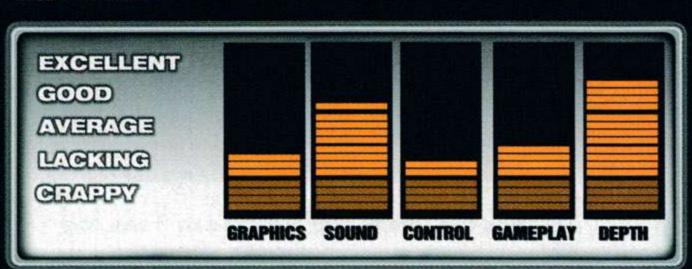
tence, Moto Racer is simply better than

he is a hot rider.

motorcycle thrills on the



EQUALIZER





The fun and

excitement of one of the

events comes to the PlayStation

FLASHBACK

PUBLISHER: Electronic

Few people will recall

own up to having pur-

fated system had a

the 3D0 (and fewer will

chased one), but the ill-

handful of great games

one of them. FIFA sport-

ed revolutionary graph-

ics for the time and the

were basic but satisfy-

alike could see what the

next generation of gam-

ing systems beyond the

Super NES and the Sega

Genesis held in store for

them - and they liked it.

FIFA SOCCER

control and gameplay

ing. For the first time, gamers and sports fans

and FIFA Soccer was

FIFA SOCCER

SYSTEM: 3D0

Arts

- and it doesn't disappoint.

world's premiere sporting

Respective system biases aside, let it be said that the N64 version of World Cup '98 has better graphics than the PlayStation version. For whatever reason, the players in the N64

version look a little more detailed and move more realistically than in the PlayStation game. The

PlayStation version of WC '98 has nothing to be ashamed of. In terms of sheer gameplay enjoyment, the differences

between the two versions are negligible. There's a marked improvement in the computer AI in general, and the goalie AI in particular. Individual player control is superb and on par with the best soccer videogames (International Superstar Soccer for N64 and Worldwide Soccer '98 for Saturn).

On the short list of

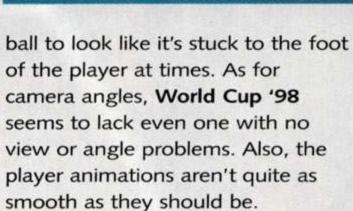
game engine for faster, more fluid gameplay and speedier reactions to commands.

complaints is the tendency of the



The motion captured graphics don't quite match the smoothness and detail exhibited by the N64 version of the game, but they're still quite good.

Television-style game stats and updates coupled with well done game commentary help to give the PlayStation version of WC '98 high marks in presentation.



World Cup '98 offers an improved FIFA

Although the PlayStation version of World Cup '98 isn't quite as good as ISS or WWS '98, the game has the good fortune of not having quality competition on the PlayStation. For now, WC '98 is the best soccer game on the PlayStation.





Price: \$49.95 Genre: Sports

Players: I to 8

ESRB rating: **€** (**€**veryone) Recommended: Memory card

Publisher: EA

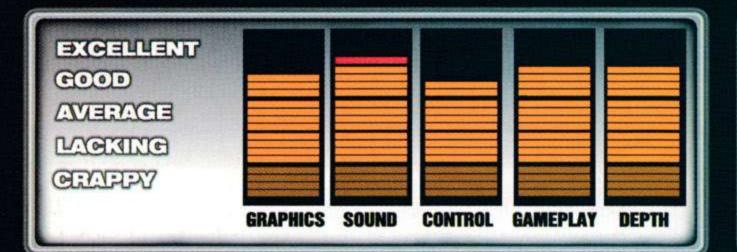
Developer: EA Sports

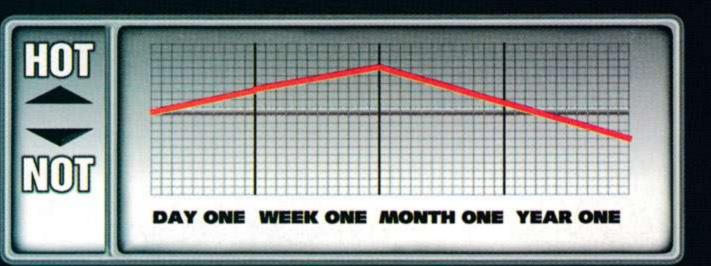
Web: www.ea.com





EQUALIZER









REVIEW

final

The console world was forever changed by FFVII. Now the same event is about to happen for the PC. Will it be any different and will the impact be as great?

were broken and hundreds of thousands of system owners were introduced for the first time to a curious new world previously known only to Square fans and RPG enthusiasts. A sometimes dark, sometimes magical universe filled with mysterious men and beautiful women

When Final Fantasy VII was

the PlayStation, sales records

released last September on

fighting together for a comof an apocalyptic wasteland, the game was the closest thing to a without expending the effort to read a book. And the mere fact that you could interact with the events within the game and shape these characters lives was more than enough incentive to hook several thousand eager new fans into Square's clutches.

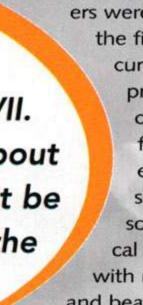
The game not only set new precedents in graphics, with fully polygonal characters, painstakingly perfect CG cinemas and gorgeously prerendered backdrops, but it also attempted to do something, thematically, which had never really been successfully presented to the masses - create an RPG that incorpodragon-slaying princes and evil knights and attempted to touch upon 'real' human issues in a complex and mature way. The main character, Cloud, a mercenary soldier fighting no longer for honor, but for money, must face his past and the horrors that lurk there, but before he can, a sacrifice must be made, a catharsis must take place and the truth must be revealed; an adventure as told through the

System: Price: Genre:

Players: **ESRB** rating: T (Teen)

Recommended: 3D accel, card Publisher: Developer: Square

Web: www.eidosinteractive.com



mon goal amongst the wreckage fully realized sci-fi-tinged fantasy

rated more than the stereotypical outline for an epic fantasy



Mature themes, such as prostitution, rape, greed, corruption, and deception keep the mood dark throughout most of the game.

continued on page 41

a childhood fraught with death

and war. The game plays like a



Gorgeous locations, such as these, take some damage from the graininess of the background renders.



The backdrops in FFVII sometimes make navigating the maps a little difficult at times.



REQUIRES

MINIMUM

Pentium 166 MHz CPU 32 MB RAM 300 MB hard disk 4x CD-ROM 16-bit hi-color 4MB video memory Direct X 5.0 (included) **Direct Show (included)**

FLASHBACK

GAME: Chrono Trigger PUBLISHER: Squaresoft SYSTEM: SNES

Square's last RPG venture on the SNES was **Chrono Trigger. Featuring** a huge number of alternate endings as well as a unique time-traveling option within the game, Chrono Trigger was an instant success and still continues to keep the public clamoring for a sequel on one of the next-generation systems. Many gamers still claim that Chrono Trigger was Square's finest hour and that Final Fantasy VII pales in comparison to the depth and skill that went into the 16-bit title. Incorporating highend graphics, as well as an involving storyline encompassing thousands of years of history, the game was popular for its battle engine and well-rounded characters.

CHRONO TRIGGER







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futuristic fairytale opera and players should expect to be lost, then found again while attempting to follow the criss-crossing plots and threads of back stories, mostly told through ambiguous flashbacks.

The experience of playing Final Fantasy VII to some was incomparable and unequalled by anything else and it was even more precious because of the exclusivity of its release on the PlayStation. No other console owners were given the chance to play it and this reason alone motivated a mass consumption of PlayStations by gamers just for this one title. Now with the release of the game on PC, a whole new audience now has access to Final Fantasy VII. But does it have enough to win over PC players by introducing them to one of the watermark console RPGs? Closing in on a year after its console release, does it still inspire

The experience of playing FFVII to some was incomparable and unequalled by anything else...

the same degree of anticipation and will it possess anything to separate it from its supposedly perfect kin?

The answer to both questions is a hesitant 'yes.' The PlayStation port of the game, while hailed as a visual achievement of gargantuan

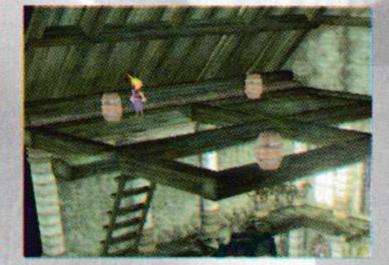
proportions by a majority of the masses, still had some shortcomings which were tied to the hardware it was developed for. The blocky polygonal characters sometimes seemed out of place and served as poor contrast to the beautiful hi-resolu-

tion back-

grounds that made up a good portion of the environments. But with the power of the PC and the incorporation of 3D accelerated support, FFVII PC's characters and

fight scenes look absolutely dreamy. Characters, though still comprised of somewhat large

polygons during interactive segments, are now rendered in higher resolutions creating smooth edges and delicate shading to make the figures less clunky and more fluid. The smoothness of the textures on each character drastically improves their visual integration with their



Completing unique tasks in certain areas break up the linear structure of the game.

prerendered surroundings. But the strange thing about this drastic improvement in character look from the PlayStation version is that the backgrounds on the PC seem to have suffered from the port. While each character may look absolutely stunning on the monitor screen, the prerendered backgrounds that they traverse are now strangely grainy and 'pixelly'. This odd visual combination is the result of taking background designs from the PlayStation version and simply stretching them out to fit the

continued on page 042

resolution. While it may

PC's more powerful display

The amount of detail that Square invested in towns and their citizens shows a great deal of care and imagination.

Exploration is key to finding all of the

items and secrets FFVII has to offer, making this a deep adventure.

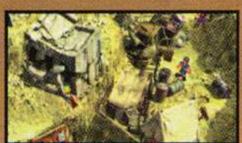
CHOCOBOS & MORE

Mini-games and sub-quests make up a substantial amount of the game in FFVII. In fact, a lot of the fun to be had in the game would be missed by skipping some of the optional side missions like Chocobo racing and breeding. The secrets significantly add depth, variety and character to an otherwise linear adventure.













continued from page 41

not be absolutely noticeable during parts of the game, it almost humorously reverses the visual maladies of the PlayStation port. It's the backgrounds that are lacking this time around on the PC, rather than the characters. Go figure.

The game's interface remains intact from the PlayStation version, lending itself more easily to a plug-in controller (it supports all peripherals under the DirectX banner) than the configuration of a keyboard. The default game controls use the directional buttons on the numerical pad of the keyboard, making the controls a little less than intuitive. This may turn off hardened PC players, who are

... Square's ambitious effort to up the ante on RPG storytelling... is admirable, but is still not without its flaws.

more adept at using their keys to do the talking in a game, rather than trying their hand at a console-type controller. If the port had somehow implemented some sort of mouse controlled interface, it may have been a bit more PC-friendly.

And while most PC gamers will have no problem picking up a SPELLS, MAGIC AND MONSTERS

The complexity of the magic and menu systems may be simplistic in comparison to some PC titles, but give the player a wider sense of freedom in 'customizing' each character's abilities and magic casting skills. **Beautifully rendered** cutscenes accompany summoning spells and do some devastating damage at the same time.



controller and settling down for the game, they may still find it difficult to stomach the amount of hard drive space they'll have to clear to

> install and run it. The minimum disk space for installing FFVII is 300 MB while

running a full install requires a little over 1 GB! Ouch! For higher end PCs, this amount may not pose such a threat, but the majority of gamers just can't sacrifice the room that is needed to run the game. It's essential to keep these requirements in mind if you plan to pick

> the game up. Content-wise, Square's ambitious effort to up the ante on RPG story-

telling to portray a gritty, more realistic series of

human interactions in a fantastic setting is admirable, but still not without its flaws. And while Eidos did the necessary, but highly appreciated job of cleaning up all the text errors which had somewhat plagued the previous translation, the storyline and content remain

the same. Therefore, any awkward ambiguities, inconsistencies and character development issues in the game have also been left intact. In undertaking such a huge project that depends so heavily on text and the development of individual personalities, Square stumbles more than a few times in its translation of FFVII. Things such as boring dialogue, one-dimensional characters,



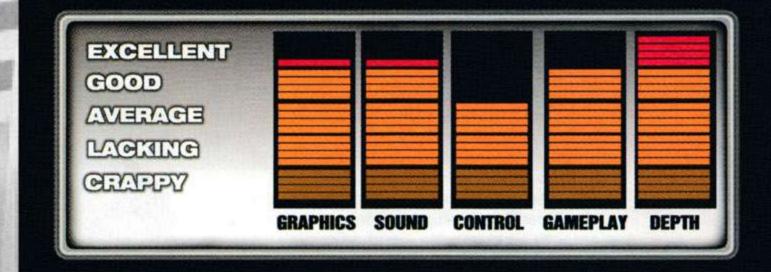
With over a hundred different types of beasts to battle, Square attempts to keep combat lively.

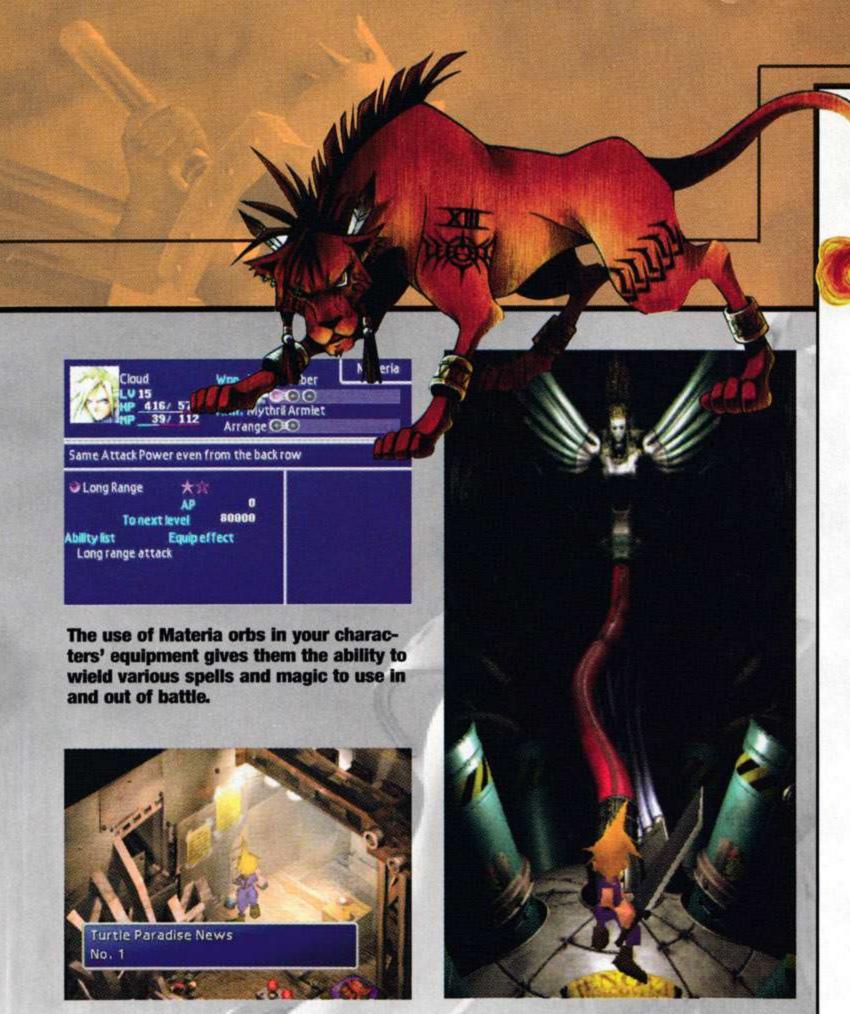
and some bizarre translations which have wreaked havoc on gamerelated newsgroups for their politically incorrect implications (Barrett's inexplicable use of street slang, Cid's verbally abusive attitude towards his female partner, etc.) all rear their ugly heads during the game. But what the game managed to do, even under the weight of a sometimes strained script, is



Interaction with objects in the environment is important for discovering secret information.

EQUALIZER





The world of FFVII holds a massive amount of curiosities to explore and discover.

bring a uniquely immersive environment to scads of PlayStation owners accustomed to the 'all action, no content' formula of most console games and unfamiliar with RPGs. The game's textual weaknesses didn't matter a whit to most on the PlayStation and for PC players new to the console role-playing mindset, the same attitude may or may not apply.

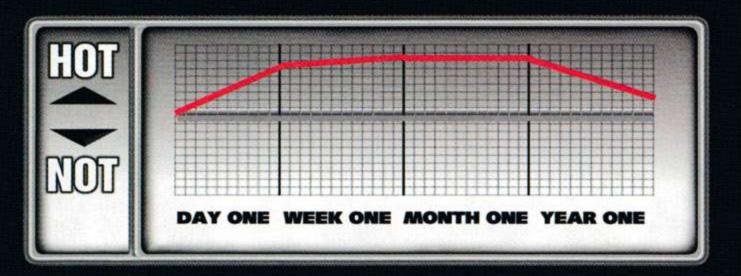
Final Fantasy VII's biggest challenge on the PC is whether or not it will appeal to a completely new audience filled with gamers already accustomed to immersive and sophisticated gameplay. It's a given that the game will be successful on reputation alone, but with a harder audience to sell it to, Eidos may

The battle between Cloud and Sephiroth motivates FFVII to the end.

find that the PlayStation version capped the enthusiasm for most PC gamers already in the know. But even on the PC, FFVII still qualifies as a must-see event in the world of games by breaking new boundaries in all categories and setting new precedents for all titles that follow on any system. Love it or hate it, no game collection would be complete without FFVII.



PREDICTED INTEREST GRAPH



Future Fantasy

Square was reportedly hard at work on the sequel to Final Fantasy VII at the same time that they were developing FFVII. The success and public adoration of the game's series demanded that the epic title be guaranteed a sequel and Square wasn't about to waste time getting to it. The company has been tight lipped with any information on FFVIII up to now, but Game Buyer will be finding out some of the details next month for a first hand scoop on the most anticipated title of '99!

The Final Fantasy I

SYSTEM: NES

• RELEASED: 1990 (US)

The first installation in one of the most popular RPG franchises in gaming history, FFI featured a very fantasy-like setting, pitting four young heroes against a dark force that has threatened the peaceful balance of the world by knocking the natural elements out of whack.

Not very advanced, but the game was solid and Square was on its way to becoming a household word for gamers.



SYSTEM: FAMICOM

RELEASED: 1988 (JAPAN)

Never released in the US, FFII featured a small step up in graphics from the first title, but expanded the storyline to weave a more complicated tale for the times. A pow-

erful empire attempts to take over the world and the only resistance lies in the form of four young orphaned warriors who have just lost everything to the empire.



SYSTEM: FAMICOM

RELEASED: 1990 (JAPAN)

The third title in the increasingly popular Japanese series, FFIII never saw the light of US shores. But, with the first Final Fantasy title hitting the States at the same

time this game was released in Japan, it was only a matter of time before US gamers wanted more. FFIII followed the adventures of four young orphans (again!) who accidentally stumble on a mystical treasure in a cave and are urged by a spirit to stop an impending threat upon their world.

FINAL FANTASY IV/FINAL FANTASY II (US)

SYSTEM: SUPER NINTENDO

• RELEASE: 1991

A year after the US release of FFI, the fourth title in the series was ported to the SNES for a growing audience. Squaresoft had gone the distance with a newer, more powerful system and incorporated better graphics and a

storyline involving a power hungry king who attempts to conquer the world by seizing all the elements. You control a soldier, once under the king's orders, who rebels against the empire with the help of other warriors and mystics.

• FINAL FANTASY V

SYSTEM: SUPER FAMICOM

RELEASE: 1992 (JAPAN)

Hailed as one of the best titles in the Final Fantasy series, FFV never made it to the US. The game is presently being ported to the PlayStation in Japan, but there are rumors that a PC version may surface for the US. With Square's latest merge with EA, this venture may become a reality, but we'll have to wait and see.

FINAL FANTASY VI/FINAL FANTASY III (US)

SYSTEM: SUPER NINTENDO

• RELEASE: 1994

The most ambitious of Square's earlier titles, FFIII in the US made leaps and bounds as far as development for the SNES. Mode 7 boards and fancy technology made

FFII truly stand out, visually and musically, while the story approached epic proportions with a ton of characters, secrets, locations and towns to marvel at. Square fans proclaim this title as the definitive Final Fantasy game above all others; even FFVII.





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REVIEW

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StarCraft cuts
through the sloppy strategy
game market like a laser through
butter, with the keen design and wellbalanced gameplay that have made
Blizzard so great.



FLASHBACK

GAME: WarCraft II PUBLISHER: Blizzard SYSTEM: PC

In the early days of realtime wargaming, the two biggest competitors were Westwood's Command & Conquer and Blizzard's WarCraft. **Both had the classic** resource management and unit building features that all games in the genre have today, but it wasn't until WarCraft II that Blizzard perfected its real-time formula, with humor, improved unit manipulation, and resource types. In fact, WarCraft II was so well done that StarCraft's original design was almost identical to it. So many games have copied it since, that it no longer feels as original as it did when it first came out, but no other game has even come close until Starcraft was released.

WARCRAFT II



As the real-time strategy gamer has gotten more sophisticated over the years, the designers are hard put to come up with enough variety to keep them interested. **StarCraft** not only meets that demand, but exceeds it in every aspect.

StarCraft offers not one, not two, but three races to com-

StarCraft not only meets the demand for variety, but exceeds it in every aspect.

mand. Gamers can choose between the enigmatic Protoss, the **Starship Trooper**-esque Zerg, and the tough Terrans in both multiplayer and solo missions. Balancing even two different military forces is difficult, and

System: PC
Price: \$54.99

Genre: Strategy

Players: I to 8

ESRB rating: M (Mature)

Publisher: Blizzard

Developer: Blizzard

Web: www.blizzard.com

Blizzard has managed a minor miracle by doing three. Each race has strengths and weaknesses in different areas which somehow balance out quite neatly. For example, Zergs reproduce fast, but die easy, while Protoss are immensely powerful, but units take longer to train than any of the other races. Terrans fall

somewhere in the middle. While it may seem they fall into easily definable cate-

gories, players will find that each is a worthy opponent, especially in multiplayer matches.

Unit control is excellent and, in properly trained hands, can mean the difference between life and death. Players can select up

to twelve units
using a powerful
organization
interface, and the
addition of fiveunit building
queues and
sequenced facility
building place
StarCraft on the
same level as the
most advanced



Protoss are the samural badasses of the game. A small number of them can

take out almost anything.

Terrans can transport their entire bases away from danger, but only if the danger doesn't follow them.

strategy games existing today.

Other features, including radically different racial building and technology trees, offer weeks' worth of strategy tinkering.

The single player mode is a tribute to careful game design. Thirty missions are split into ten missions per race. Each campaign tells a part of a story, starting with the Terrans and ending in the Protoss. Correspondingly, the Terran missions are the easiest.

PC Requirements

Windows 95 or NT 4.0 • Pentium 90 • 16 MB RAM • 80 MB available hard drive space • 2X CD-ROM for gameplay (4X for FMV) • Local bus SVGA video card (Direct-X compatible) • Microsoft-compatible mouse • DirectX-compatible sound card Multiplayer requirements: 2 players • 14.4 Kbps Modem or Null Modem Cable • 2-8 players • IPX Network or Battle.net with Internet connection

while the Protoss forays require nimble fingers and experienced minds. They're also integrated quite tightly with the story, enabling gamers to play an epic, which will give them more incentive to finish the single player mode instead of jumping straight into multiplayer.

Solo missions incorporate the standard mix of objectives, usually involving defending a base or destroying an enemy. However, each campaign is spiced up with trickier missions. Sometimes

players will go against the Zerg

and the Protoss simultaneously,

but won't be allowed to attack

base to steal information with

are designed in such a way to

never seem impossible, just difficult, and are interesting

enough to keep playing until

keep the level survivable.

exhaustion. On the down side, the AI is sometimes hobbled to

a big draw in real-time strategy,

even the most hardcore gamer

dard battle levels, strange and

instance, Capture the Flag pits

players against player to find a

flag and drag it back to base.

The catch is there are several

teams to choose from, from

stealth units to demolitions, each

with its own abilities and disad-

vantages. The strangest must be Zerg herding, where players will

even bizarre alternative play

modes are available. For

and StarCraft has enough to keep

interested. In addition to the stan-

Multiplayer mode, of course, is

the Zerg, or will have to invade a

only one squad of soldiers. Levels

Starcraft is a game that's easy to get into.

but almost impossible to put away.

have to drag Zerglings back into their own respective corrals. Should computer opponents be selected in a network game, humans gamers will face the full, unfettered computer AI, which is frighteningly intelligent - feinting, trapping and picking off weak opponents with alarming ease. Winning against the computer is almost as exciting as beating fellow homo sapiens.

If there are any quibbles about StarCraft, it's that it's a game that's easy to get into, but almost

> impossible to put away. It's the best of the current crop of real-time strate-

gy games, with great graphics, great missions, great network gaming, and great gameplay. Pick

this one up with no reservations. It's worth it.



In multiplayer mode, the graphics make air and land wars become awesome struggles



The Zerg go forth and multiply with a vengeance, and can often win with sheer numbers.



NO REPLACEMENTS!

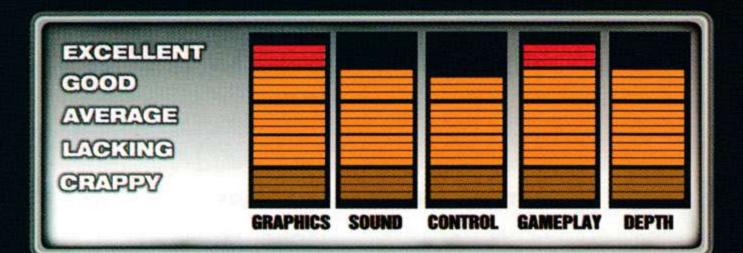
Each race has at least one mission that you have to finish with only the troops present at the beginning.







EQUALIZER



PREDICTED INTEREST GRAPH



Game Buyer

Wargames

Originality is dealt yet another blow to the head in MGM Interactive's WarGames.

Aside from the 3D world (which, while pretty, causes a few

while pretty, causes a few problems), and some unique units, anyone

This real-time strategy
game has a lot less to do
with the early 1980's film than
in copying the formula
that made this genre

a success.

who's played any game such as WarCraft or Command & Conquer will immediately get that deja vu feeling of having been there before.

Based very loosely on the movie (both NORAD or WOPR forces are available for command, and there are the occasional e-mail messages from characters that were in the film), WarGames' gameplay consists of building up bases and forces, and going out on missions to wipe out the enemy. The interface is effective in controlling the action, but again, only because it's extremely derivative and has been honed by other games over the years.

The units and landscapes are nicely rendered (especially with a 3D accelerator card), but on certain maps, vehicles have a

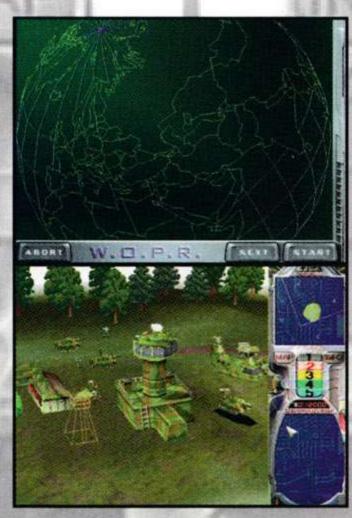
System: PC
Price: \$44,95
Genre: Strategy
Players: I to 4
ESRB rating: T (Teen)
Recommended: 3D Accel, card
Publisher: MGM Interactive
Developer: Interactive Studios

Web: www.mgminteractive.com

tendency to get stuck in areas that they can't escape from, like river beds. The Artificial Intelligence puts up a good fight for the most part, but that didn't stop it from sending overmatched units into well-defended bases on occasion.

WarGames is decent, and if the term 'real-time strategy' is foreign to you, you'll definitely get a kick out of it. But in the final analysis, it's a game with a few new touches that's been done better many times before.





This scenario is taking place in the

establish a base so that additional

forces can be airlifted in.

middle of New York City. The primary goal is to get to Central Park and

The missions in WarGames take place in various locations throughout the world. The terrain you do battle on will reflect the local flora and fauna.

one The second second

The bigger they are, the harder they fall. This hovercraft just unloaded the Mk-1 Walker in the nick of time before being blown to smithereens.

REQUIRES

MINIMUM

Pentium 90 or better Windows 95 16 MB RAM 16 MB Available Hard Drive space 4X CD-Rom Drive 2MB SVGA Video Card 16-bit sound card

RECOMMENDED

Pentium 166 or better 32 MB RAM 8X CD-Rom Drive 3D Accelerator Card

E

EXCELLENT GOOD AVERAGE LACKING GRAPPY GRAPHICS SOUND CONTROL GAMEPLAY DEPTH



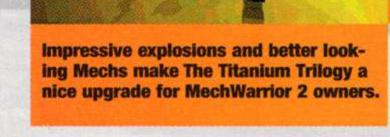
Mechwarrior 2: Tittanium Trilogy

MechWarrior 2 is one of the most popular series of action games for the PC. Activision's new Titanium Trilogy gathers together the original MechWarrior 2, the

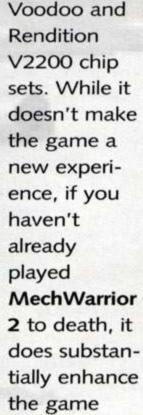
Activision is re-releasing MechWarrior 2 series as MechWarrior 2: The Titanium Trilogy, with an enhanced graphics engine and support for 3D video cards.

MechWarrior 2, the
expansion pack
MechWarrior 2:
Ghost Bear's
Legacy, and the
sequel
MechWarrior
2: Mercenaries
for a very reasonable price.
If you've never
played a MechWarrior

2 game, you're the pilot of a large walking tank, bent on the destruction of other large walking tanks. The game is based on FASA Corporation's Battletech game universe and allows you to join a Mech clan and ride to glory on the metal backs of your fallen foes.



To make **The Titanium Trilogy** a more compelling purchase to current owners of **MechWarrior**, Activision has taken the rapidly aging graphics engine and upgraded it and included support for 3D accelerator cards, like the 3DFX



System: PC
Price: \$44.99
Genre: Action
Players: I to I6
ESRB rating: T (Teen)
Publisher: Activision
Developer: Activision

Web: www.activision.com

Improved graphics make this night scene

accelerated game released this year.

look as good as any 3D

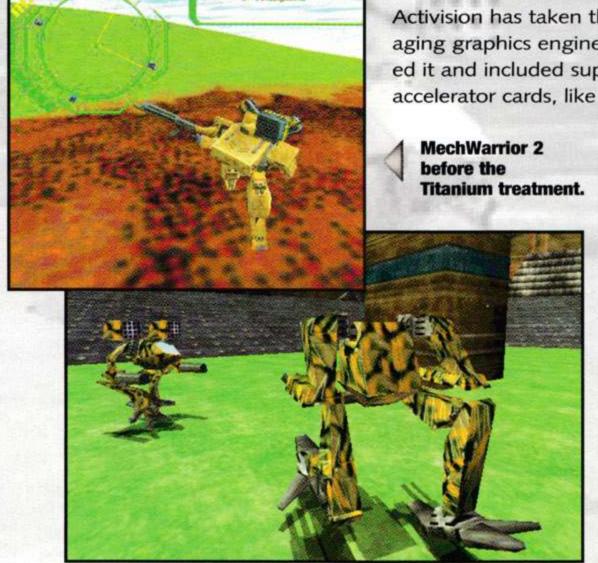
Getting all three games in one box is a great deal. The improved graphics also keeps the game competitive with Activision's other walking tank game, **Heavy Gear**. If you're looking for a lot of gaming for the buck, **The Titanium Trilogy** is a good place to start.



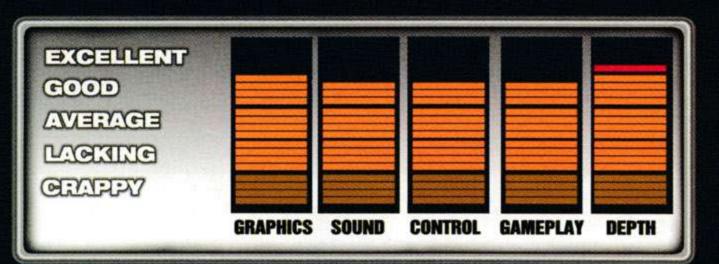
REQUIRES

MINIMUM

Windows 95
Pentium 133
2X CD-Rom Drive
16MB of Ram
195MB Free Hard
Drive space

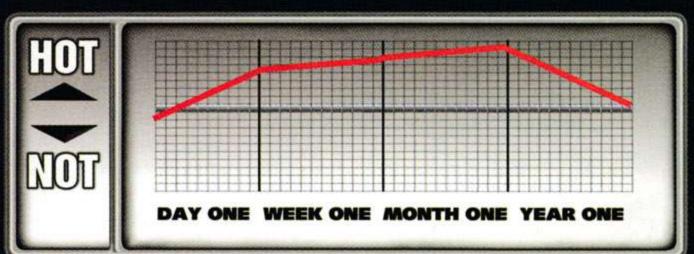


EQUALIZER



PREDICTED INTEREST GRAPH

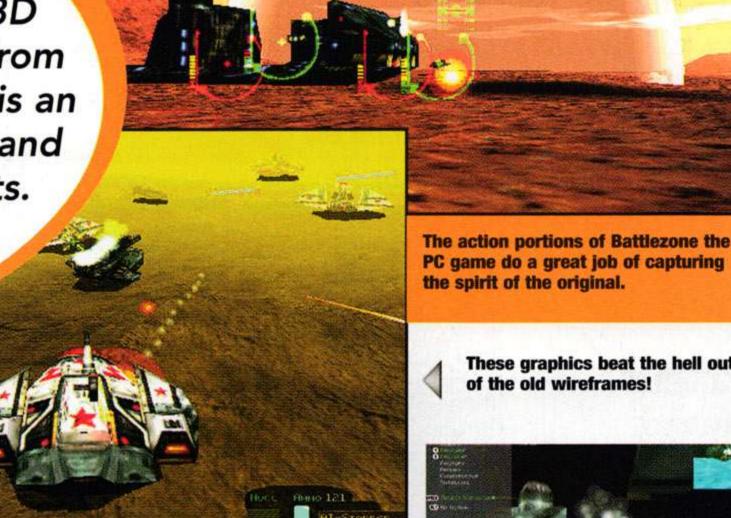
play.



REVIEWS

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Despite allusions to the classic arcade game, Battlezone is significantly different from the 3D shooter that most people will recall from the early '80s. Instead, the game is an intriguing mix of real-time strategy and first-person shooter elements. The result is a new action/ strategy hybrid genre.



BLT No action

the spirit of the original.

These graphics beat the hell out of the old wireframes!

HEAD TO HEAD

REVIEW

GAME: Uprising **PUBLISHER: 3D0** PRICE: \$49.95 **GB RATING: HHHHH**

Uprising is Battlezone's main competition and also the game that most successfully combines the disparate elements of a real-time strategy game with a first-person perspective shooter.

Uprising and **Battlezone both shine in** terms of technical performance, with the 3D accelerated versions of both games possessing stunning graphics. Battlezone gets the nod in the purely softwaredriven version of the game, as Uprising's graphics are pixelated and less attractive without hardware support.

UPRISING ****



Set during the space race of the late 50's to early 70's, Battlezone's premise is that the primitive manned space flights that marked the era were all a front that cloaked an interplanetary battle between forces of the United States and the U.S.S.R. The discovery of alien technology has resulted in major technological advancements and spurred a power struggle in space, where

In a genre that has yet to fully establish its gameplay parameters. Battlezone brings a number of innovative features to the table.

both the Americans and Soviets are vying for more knowledge, and ultimately, control. The general public remains ignorant of these occurrences, as the increasingly brutal battles rage from planet to planet with the fate of the United States and democracy at stake.

Although somewhat superfluous (after all, the arcade game didn't need a storyline), Battlezone borrows a page from the Command & Conquer series by offering a compelling storyline that gives the player incentive to continue solving missions in order to see what happens next.

The art design of the game helps to add to the atmosphere, with weapons and assets that feature an enticing mixture of traditional and futuristic elements. Activision has done a nice job of contriving a story that helps to inject the player into the

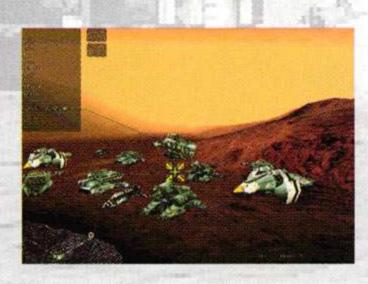
Battlezone world. When it comes to the actual

technical performance of the game, there is little to complain about in Battlezone. Pop the game into a reason-

ably powerful PC (Pentium 200 or better) with a 3D graphics accelerator card and the player will be treated to graphics that rank with the best that PC games have to offer today. High resolution, high frame-rates, detailed textures, and a myriad of special lighting and filtering effects result in a game that looks sharp, moves smoothly, and is a veritable visual feast. For gamers not blessed with the latest in PC technology, the software version of the



The Recycler is utilized to build units and manage resources.



There are 30 unique units in the game, including tanks, fighters, and battle mechs.

System: PC

Genre: action/strategy

Players: I to 16

Price: \$49.95

ESRB rating: EVERYONE

Recommended: 3D Accelerator Card

Publisher: Activision

Developer: Activision

Web: www.activision.com



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Pentium 120 (Pentium 166 recommended) • Windows 95 • DirectX 5 • 16MB RAM • 235MB of uncompressed disk space • 16-bit Video Card w/ 1MB RAM • Win 95 compatible Sound Card • 2X CD-ROM Drive

game still offers a remarkably attractive game, albeit at the price of reduced frame-rate and blockier graphics. Set the resolution and details at lower levels and the game still performs admirably on lower end systems.

Sound can't be described as revolutionary, but less is more in terms of **Battlezone**. There is no

Some might argue that multiplayer action is where Battlezone truly shines!

music during gameplay, with the only real sounds being voice communications that serve as mission prompts and status updates, and peripheral battle sounds. The sparse effect manages to work nicely with the cold, desolate atmosphere of space combat and further immerses the player into the gaming experience.

Creating a new gameplay experience by utilizing elements and characteristics of different game genres is not without its design challenges, and Battlezone succeeds magnificently in some aspects while falling short in others. If forced to choose one over the other. Battlezone succeeds on the action side of the equation better than the strategy side. Piloting any of the hovering battle vehicles in the game via keyboard, mouse, or joystick control is a joy, with the floating sensation of the vehicles perfectly communicated to the player. There are 30 unique combat vehicles in the game and 25 individual weapons with a satisfying variety of differing characteristics. Anyone familiar with first-person perspective shooters on the PC will have no problem stepping right in and reveling in the

destructive fun.

Where **Battlezone** has some problems is in the incorporation of the strategy elements into its gameplay. In concept, the strategy elements of the game are impressive, with resource management features that will be familiar to real-time strategy fans, and a level of individual unit control that outshines any of its competitors. It is

in the execution of the strategy features that

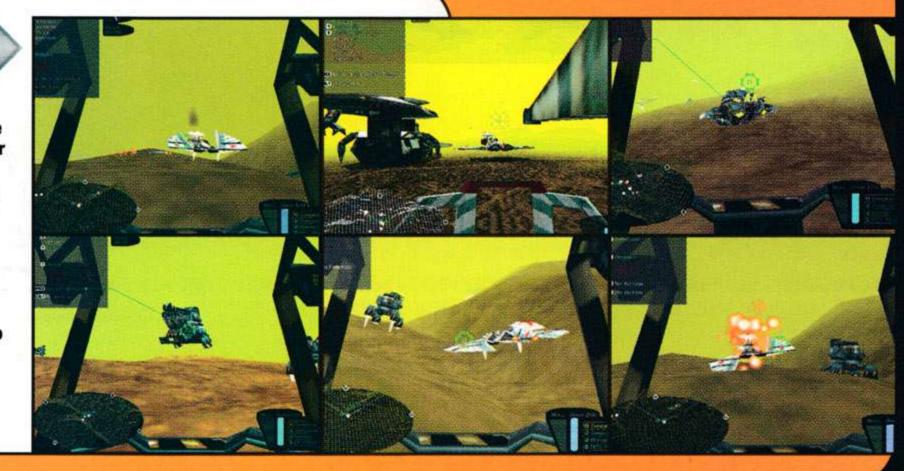
Battlezone stumbles somewhat. A menu-heavy control interface forces the player to micro-manage every unit action to such a degree that it becomes difficult to focus any attention on the first-person action portion of the game. There is a process by which units can be

continued on page 52

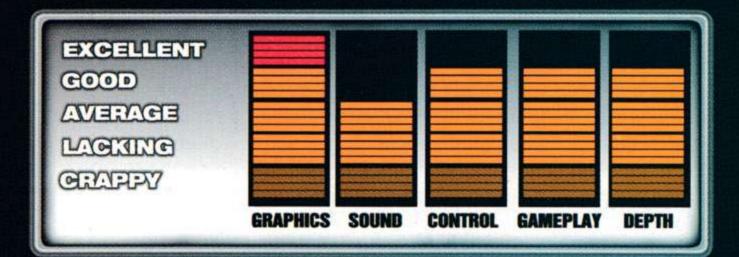


FIRST-PERSON STRATEGY

The firstperson perspective implies an action game, **but Battlezone** uses a number of strategy elements. The result is a frenetic pace that requires the player to constantly plan ahead while trying to stay alive.



EQUALIZER



PREDICTED INTEREST GRAPH

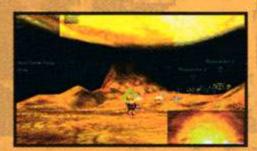


Game Buyer

REVIEWS







Blast Fest



continued from page 51

grouped and assigned to specific keyboard buttons, but this is another level of complexity that pales against the intuitive mouse-driven interface of traditional real-time strategy games. As clumsy as the interface is, repeated play will result in a familiarity of the system that will allow the player to exploit and enjoy the comprehensive nature of the control system. But be forewarned, there is learning curve that must be addressed and overcome.

Beyond the control issues, the

general gameplay experience in Battlezone is an enjoyable one. Missions

an enjoyable one. Missions have multiple objectives which must be successfully fulfilled in order to progress in the game.
Although the

Although the objectives are generally lin-

ear in nature, the manner in which the challenges are overcome is left in the hands of the player. Elements such as a variety of mission types, differing planetscapes, and vehicles and weapons with unique capabilities keep the gameplay fresh. Overall, there is a satisfying amount of depth, with the player able to play a number of missions on seven distinct worlds as either the U.S. or the U.S.S.R.

The multiplayer facet is one of the most important for PC games. Battlezone's ability to offer head-to-head play via modem or sixteen player battles over a LAN (Local Area Network) add substantial replay value to the game. In fact, since the strategy elements of the game are put on the back burner for the multiplayer game, some might argue that multiplayer action is where Battlezone truly shines.

In a genre that has yet to fully establish its gameplay parameters, **Battlezone** brings a number of innovatons to the DEFENSE

UTILITY

BEACONS

RECYCLER

FACTORY

SUPPLY

CONSTRUCT

SATELLITE

SPICE SELECT BOMBER

GLT No ACTION

UNIT TYPES



Totally wasting an enemy at point blank range can be a very satisying experience!

The Big, Mean, Green Machine never looked this awesome before.
Combining extremely powerful fire-power, all terrain capability and those cool skull decals make this the killing machine of choice!



SOFTWARE



HARDWARE

table, wrapped in an appealing and technically proficient package.

Some gaming novices may have some difficulty becoming comfortable with the game's control structure, but players willing to invest the time will find a challenging game with a satisfying level of complexity and depth.



GAME PERFORMANCE

PENTIUM 133

RAM: 16MB

acceleration: none

Battlezone doesn't shine on a low end machine without hardware acceleration, but the software version of the game is still impressive. Performance of the action game is a little lacking, but the strategy elements still function even without top flight hardware. Don't bother turning on textures on anything below a P166.

PENTIUM 266

RAM: 32MB

acceleration: 3Dfx Voodoo I

A mid-level system offers a satisfying **Battlezone** experience as the
only thing that a high end system
adds is slightly enhanced levels of
detail and performance. Hardcore
gamers and tech freaks can quibble, but a year ago, this level of
performance was cutting-edge.
Most gamers will find nothing to
complain about.

PENTIUM II 300

RAM: 64MB

acceleration: 3Dfx Voodoo II

These days, a top level PC offers a gaming experience that can only be exceeded by the most powerful arcade machines. Max out the detail and resolution levels – anyone with a PII 300 or better (accelerator card equipped) can expect a supremely satisfying game experience.

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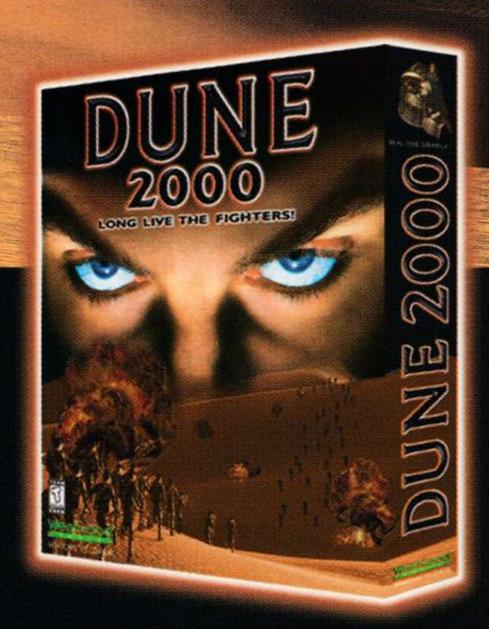


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"Game of the Year"

-GameSpot Reader's Choice Awards

"Best Real-Time Strategy Game"

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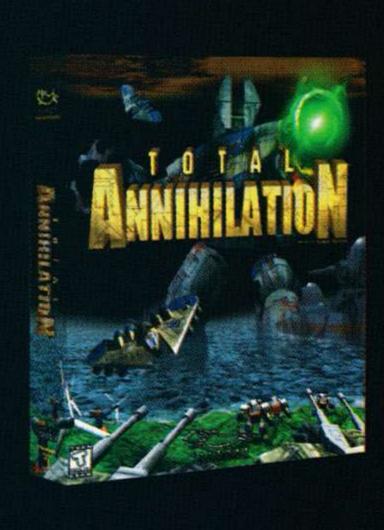
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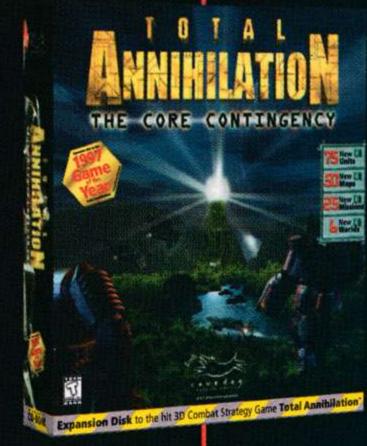




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Total Annihilation, winner of over 50 awards world wide and Total Annihilation:

The Core Contingency, the second explosive chapter in the world's hottest strategy saga.



MJJ Tank platoon II

It's been said that
war is hell and, unless you
plan on spending a long time
with the manual and training
mode, you'll find this game is a
hard place also!

When the original M1 Tank
Platoon was released back in
1989, it was named simulation of the year by several
magazines. The sequel
is here and, while it

nere and, while
is an extremely
realistic
journey
into the
operations
of an
armored
platoon,
some may

same level of realism may cut down quite a bit on the fun factor.

find that the

This is a highly detailed sim, not a tank game. For players looking to hop in the old battle wagon and start winning the war, they should be advised that this is probably not the game for them. Instead, M1 Tank Platoon II caters to the person who wants to know exactly what it's like fighting on today's mechanized battlefield.

The graphics are excellent, as are the sound effects. The music,

on the other hand, is your typical '80s heavy metal guitar stuff and is best turned off. When the player first assumes command of his tank, he may find the control, especially of the main gun sight, a bit much to handle, but after spending a fair amount of time in the extensive training mode, this problem should resolve itself.

With two combat modes,
Desert Storm and NATO, and the
opportunity to play with four
others over a LAN, M1 Tank
Platoon II has an incredible
amount of gameplay.

As far as depth goes, some players may find themselves in over their heads, resulting in frustration. If you're willing to spend the time in training, though, M1 Tank Platoon II won't disappoint.

Every one of these buttons and switches does something, so be real careful.



The explosions in this game are a joy to behold, unless they're centered on you.

When fighting infantry, there's nothing better than the top

mounted machine gun.

It smells like victory! Details, like the





REQUIRES

MINIMUM

Pentium 133 MHz 16 Mb Ram 200 Mb Hard drive space 4X CD Rom DirectX-type sound card

RECOMMENDED

Pentium 200 MHz 32 Mb Ram 3D accelerator card Joystick

System: PC

Price: **545.99**

Genre: Simulation

Players: 1 to 5

ESRB rating: T (Teen)

Rec. 3D accelerator card

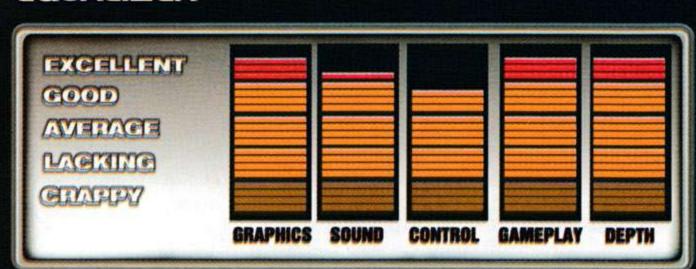
Publisher: Microprose

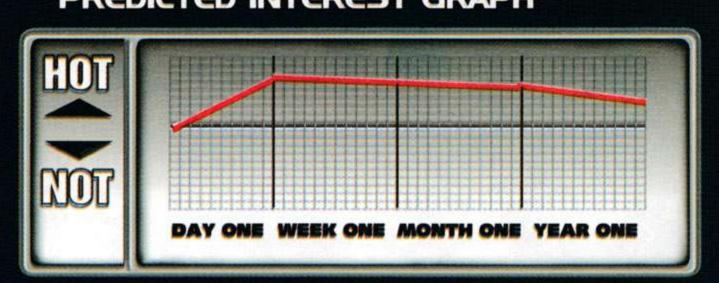
Developer: Microprose

Web: www.microprose.com



EQUALIZER





Imagine going from 0 to 300+ miles an hour in about four seconds, while an engine the size of a small house screams like all the demons of Hell right behind your back. Sound exciting?

You're damn

While a fiery, four second drag race may be exciting, the real thrills in Burnout are the hours spent under the hood.

right it does and now, thanks to the folks Bethesda Software and Hot Rod magazine, everyone can experience that rush once limited to a crazy few.

Burnout is the first true drag racing simulation. While a drag race itself lasts a very short time, you'll spend hours tinkering with your ride to squeeze every last bit of horsepower and traction out of the beast and loving every minute of it! The pit interface is simple to understand and use, even if the numbers that you'll be dialing in are a bit arcane.

There's even a racing league, the Simulated Hot Rod Association (SHRA), that sponsors races on the internet, where up to 32 drag fiends at a time can kick the tires and light the fire. Big fun!

Let's cut to the chase! With internet play, fantastic replay

Another 'really great driver' at work. So real, you can almost hear him scream...

> value, sweet graphics, and a gorgeous VCR mode, Burnout is one game you've just gotta have.

HAVE IT!

The Simulation Hot Rod Association sets up multiplayer races.

price: 544.99 genre:

Sounds like a little

players: I to 64 (32 via Internet) **ESRB** rating: **€** (**Everyone**)

3D Accelerator card recommended:

一种发生的自己为此时间的能够

publisher: Bethesda Studios developer: Media Tech West

website: www.bethsoft.com

Excuse me, but I've just topped 270

mph and the five second bracket.

suspension work is in order...

Surnout features a fan tastic VCR mode which allows you to see yourself screaming across the finish line.

The hole shot goes to the far lane, as the Chevy grabs too much traction and tries to go airborne.

Kick the tires and light the fire! If this car had wings, you'd be in New York by now.

REQUIRES

Pentium 75MHz

Super VGA card

RECOMMENDED

Sound Blaster card

80 MB Hard Disk space 3D Accelerator card

Pentium 166MHz

70 MB Hard Disk space

MINIMUM

16 MB Ram

Video driver

32 MB Ram

EQUALIZER

EXCELLENT COOD AVERAGE LACKING CEMPLEY CONTROL GAMEPLAY DEPTH



REQUIRES

Pentium 100 or better

PCI or AGP Graphics Card

MINIMUM

Windows 95

2X CD-Rom Drive

Disk Space

RECOMMENDED

4X CD-ROM Drive

16-bit Sound Card

20MB Available Hard

Pentium 133 or better 3D Accelerator Card

16MB RAM

Hardballe

Bottom of 1st

The latest addition to the HardBall series boasts a ton of features and new 3D graphics, but spotty execution leaves the player longing for the HardBall of old.

With a brand new 3D engine and a ton of

features, HardBall 6 initially looked to give Triple Play '99 a serious run for its money in the PC Baseball market.

But the reality of the situation is that HardBall 6 is a game that looks good in screenshots, but doesn't come close to matching the visual impact of the best console baseball games, even with 3D acceleration. The stadiums are for the most part acceptably recreated and, thanks to the process of motion capturing, a number of player motion sequences are smooth and realistic looking. However, as soon as a player performs an action that

Situational hitting and the option to predict pitches are some nice control elements that have been added to HardBall 6.

apparently wasn't motion captured, they look like mannequins on a swizzle stick.

These visual problems overlap into the area of control which directly influences the gameplay experience. Even utilizing a game pad, HardBall 6 is difficult to control with precision. This being said, the arcade play of HardBall 6 is enjoyable – it just doesn't excel in design or execution.

There's actually a lot of nice elements in HardBall 6 that simply require more attention to detail in order to fully realize the game's potential. That may not be much consolation to HardBall 6, but there's definitely hope for HardBall 7.



System: PC

HardBall 6 has both the Major League Baseball and the Players

Association licenses to better recreate the national pastime.

Price: \$49.9 Genre: Sports

Players: 1 or 2

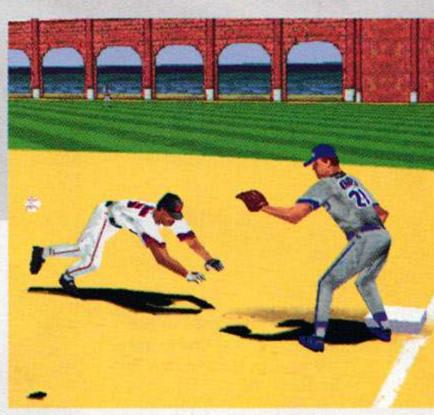
ESRB rating: E (Everyone)

Recommended: Game Pad

Publisher: Accolade

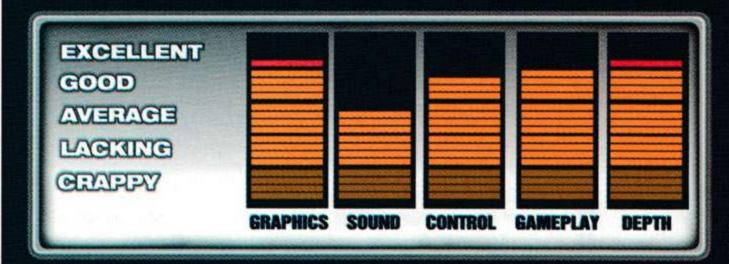
Developer: Mindspan

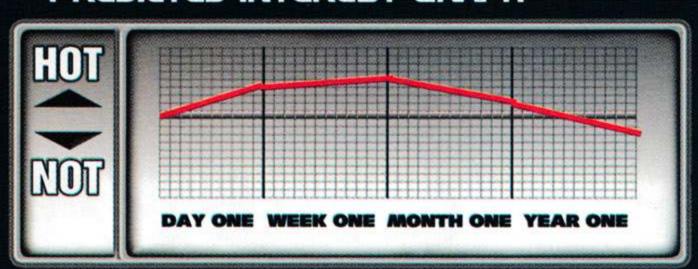
Web: www.accolade.com



All 30 Major League stadiums are beautifully recreated. In addition, Pac Bell Park (the SF Giants forthcoming digs) and a bonus All-Time stadium are included.

EQUALIZER



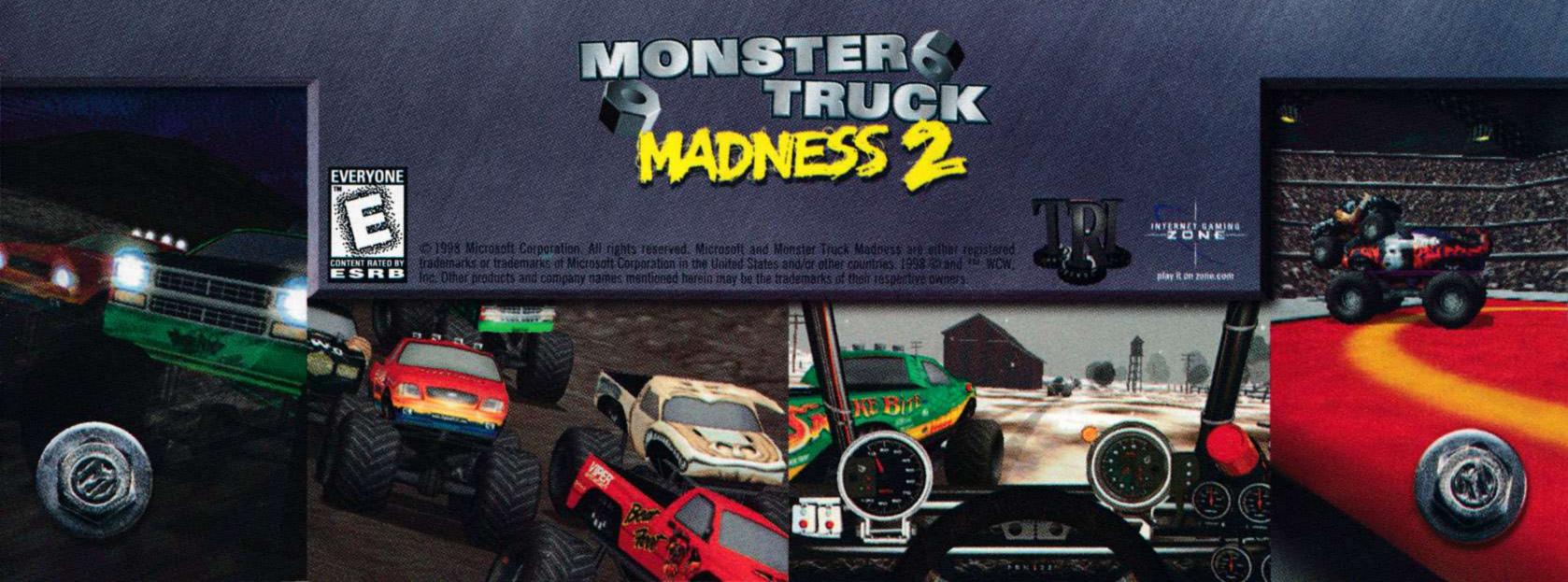




FYOUGANT BEAT EM, FIRST STATEMARK FIRS

Monster Truck Madness® 2 is here, with more ground-pounding, trash-talking fun than the original. Featuring 20 trucks that show the damage you dish out, including four new WCW™ and nWo™ WrestleTrucks like "Hollywood" Hogan. Risky night racing and nasty weather options. Thumping force-feedback support. The Summit Rumble, an outrageous multiplayer game of "king of the hill."

And 11 wild new tracks. Get your free demo and start crushing the competition at www.microsoft.com/games/MTM2



Swarm is a decent action shooter that offers a lot of missions and a low price. But beyond that, it brings very little to a PC table full of action games.

System: PC
Price: \$29.95
Genre: Shooter
Players: |
ESRB rating: E (Everyone)
Recommended: Game pad
Publisher: Reflexive Ent.
Developer: Reflexive Ent.

The blue dots represent the precious EZT, and the reason for all this carnage.

Web: www.reflexive.net

REQUIRES

Pentium PC
Windows 95
16 MB RAM
70 MB hard-drive space
SVGA 600x480
Mouse
Double-speed CD-ROM

Swarm is a simple shoot-'emup action game that takes place in the future. The graphics are crisp and sharp, even without using any of that fancy 3D acceleration. And although the models are a bit on the simplistic side, they convey what's going on and blow up very nicely.

And so you fly around outer space, collect power-ups and EZT, and shoot aliens. That pretty much sums the game up. It comes with over 100 missions and, while they do tend to get a bit tedious (each requiring you to collect a certain amount of EZT or kill a number of aliens), they progress nicely in terms of duration and difficulty. The aliens get tougher and you get cooler weapons.

At times like this, the controls really become a hassle - you're getting zapped while you try to aim.

The only major downer to this game are its controls. The ship is hard to control, and **Swarm** doesn't offer the precision that a gamer would expect. With certain weapons, it's much too hard

The Al isn't too bad - alien ships will peel off and attack if you get too close to their cargo ships.

to shoot - a major bummer that slows the action.

There's nothing special about this game, and under normal circumstances, it probably wouldn't get that high of a recommendation. However, at the price of \$29.95, it's worth a look if you want some mindless shoot-'em-up action.



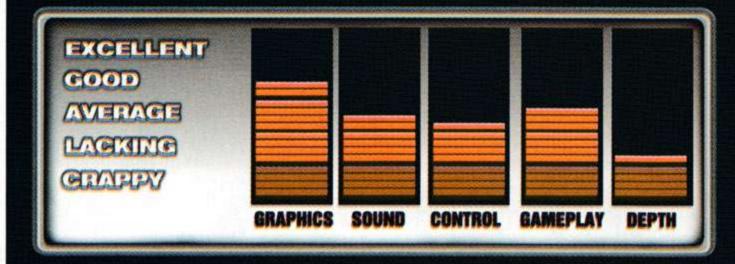


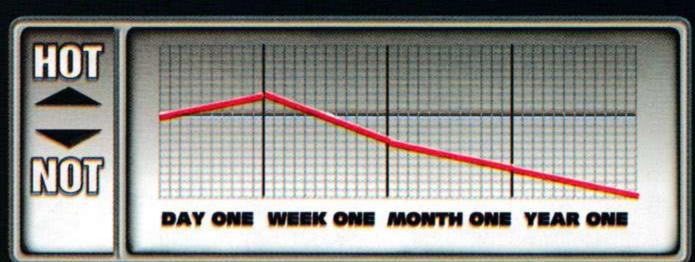
The weapons
work well, particularly the missile,
which locks
on perfectly.





EQUALIZER





Shadowmaster

Imagine Doom in a car, with nice graphics and a feeling of hopelessness in a mystical otherworld. Now imagine that it isn't as good as it sounds...

System: PC Price: Genre: racing/shooting Players: I to 4 (lan/serial) **ESRB** rating: T (Teen) Recommended: 3D Accel. card Publisher: Psugnosis Developer: Hammerhead Web: www.psugnosis.com

> Shadowmaster runs on hardware accelerated PCs, so the graphics are smooth and sharp.

REQUIRES

MINIMUM

Pentium 133MHz 16 MB Ram **3D Accelerator Card** Video driver Direct X 5

RECOMMENDED

Pentium 166MHz 32 MB Ram Steering Wheel **Direct Sound card** Serial Link/LAN

There are more than enough shooters lining the shelves of PC software stores, and most of them are Doom or Descent clones. Only a couple of games break those genre boundaries and, in its defense, Shadowmaster is one of them. For a start, it puts you in a vehicle of sorts, giving this game some elements of a driving game. It also busts the Sci-Fi mold, putting you instead in a fantasy world, with more mythical monsters.

Sadly, these original features don't make up for the game's many limitations. Perhaps the most annoying drawback is the cramped

Creature design is one of the

strongest elements in the game.

and claustrophobic nature of the levels. The momentum of your

vehicle usually

Spectacular light effects add to the fan-

tasy atmos-

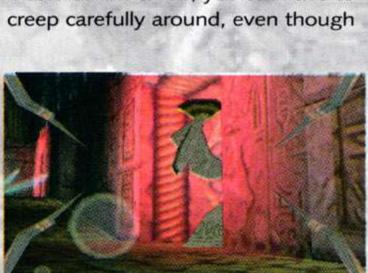
phere, but can

be confusing.

slides you into the path of unavoidable danger, meaning that even when you've mastered the levels, you still have to

the action seems to call for reckless abandon.

The blasting is fun though, the levels are long and visually entertaining, but the action has to many flaws. Carmageddon, from Interplay, is similar and much, much better.

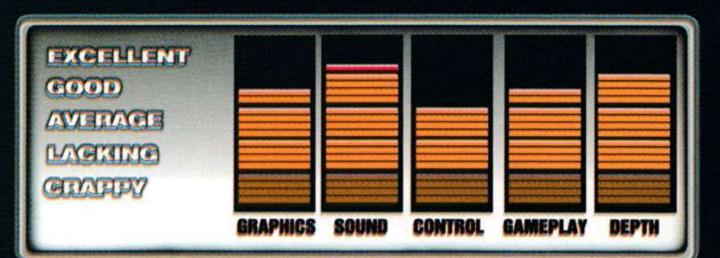


There are puzzles to solve, but like Quake, they're all about doors.



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EQUALIZER





REQUIRES

Intel Pentium processor

75MB of Hard Disk space

4X or faster CD drive

Microsoft mouse

MINIMUM

16 MB RAM

Windows 95

Of Light And Darkness

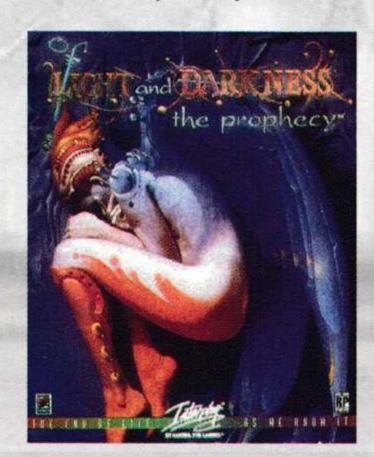
Racing against the
Apocalypse may not be a
completely original theme in
Hollywood, but in videogaming, it serves as an interesting change of pace.

Of Light and Darkness

Taking the 'Myst-ian'
concept of point and click
graphic adventures to the next
level, Interplay's artistic Of Light
and Darkness gives enough
bang for the buck.

takes the concept of spiritual redemption, the sins of some of the most infamous historical figures, real-time graphic

and real-time graphic adventuring and mixes them all together with a warped sense of humor, big name voice talent and character and set designs from quasi-surrealist, Gil Bruvel. The result is an incredibly beautiful, but very challenging adventure in which you must stop the Apocalypse by collecting artifacts and orbs in order to redeem the souls of the biggest villains mankind has yet seen, such as Ivan the Terrible and John Wayne Gacy.



Voice samples in some of the areas will give you an idea of what kind of pestilence and plague await.

Once you begin the game, you'll be automatically placed on a ticking clock which counts down to the Apocalypse. What you must do is find each of the apparition's artifacts, collect colored orbs to use with the artifacts, then find where the apparition is hiding out so you can use all the allocated objects in order to send them to purgatory - all under a punishing time limit!

Incorporating a good dose of humor and a visually gorgeous world, the game sets new high-roads for the genre. Fans of unique PC titles or highly challenging adventures will definitely want to take a long look at Of Light and Darkness.

The centerpiece of the village serves as the best example of the highly unique and intricately designed artwork of the game. Eerie lightsourcing gives off the atmospheric feel of doom and dread - exactly what the developers were going for.

System: PC

Price: \$49.95

Genre: Graphic Adventure

Players:

ESRB rating: T (Teen)

Recommended: DX video card

Publisher: Interplay

Developer: Tribal Dreams Web: www.interplay.com

BUY IT!



EQUALIZER

EXCELLENT GOOD AVERAGE L'ACKING GRAPPY GRAPHICS SOUND CONTROL GAMEPLAY DEPTH



REQUIRES

150MB hard-drive space

Direct Draw 1MB SVGA

Double-speed CD-ROM

MINIMUM

Pentium 16MB RAM

Mouse

Windows 95

Almuj Man

Although Army
Men is a solid game, one
wonders: where's the
humor? Certainly not here,
and that's a shame.

Originally announced as a real-time strategy game, 3DO whipped the car around and took **Army Men** down a much different road. It's still a strategy game with you fighting as a little plastic green

green
army guy,
but now
it's much
more
action oriented and
gives the player direct control
over one character,
charismatic Sarge. And

the charismatic Sarge. And while it is a fun game, there is nothing here that will take the game to the top of the heap.

A war is raging between the green army men and the evil tan army men, and the conflict takes place across three different terrain settings: the desert, the mountains and the bayou. The graphics serve the purpose, but aren't anything spectacular.

The missions themselves are pretty standard strategy fare: rescue some troops, protect the cargo, steal some plans, etc. And that is the biggest fault with this game. As is, it's just another war game with plastic green men. And that's just wrong. The terrain should have looked like a backyard, complete with huts made of sticks and mud puddles. This game should have had a big-time

One of the bright spots of the game: stealing precious plastic from a bank. There should have been more moments like this.



This is one of the many clues that will help you piece together the location of the final prize: a secret weapon!

sense of humor, and it doesn't.

A low price and solid gameplay save this game from oblivion, but while playing, I couldn't stop thinking about how much more fun it could have been.

THINK ABOUT IT!



System: PC

yesterday...

Price: \$39.95 Genre: Action

Players: 1 to 8

ESRB rating: E (Everyone)

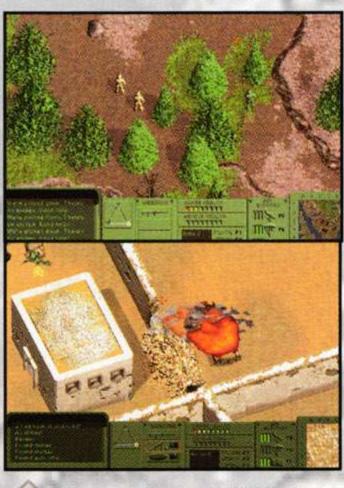
Marney !

Burning those little plastic men sure brings

back the memories. Seems like it was just

En tent

Publisher: 3DO
Developer: 3DO
Web: www.3do.com

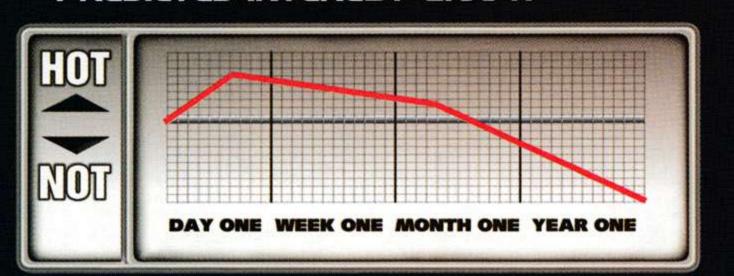


The graphics do a fair job of conveying the setting and troops.

EQUALIZER

EXCELLENT GOOD AVERAGE LACKING GRAPPY GRAPPY GRAPHICS SOUND CONTROL GAMEPLAY DEPTH

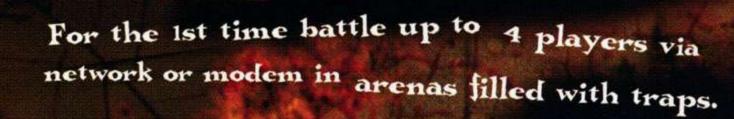
PREDICTED INTEREST GRAPH



REVIEWS

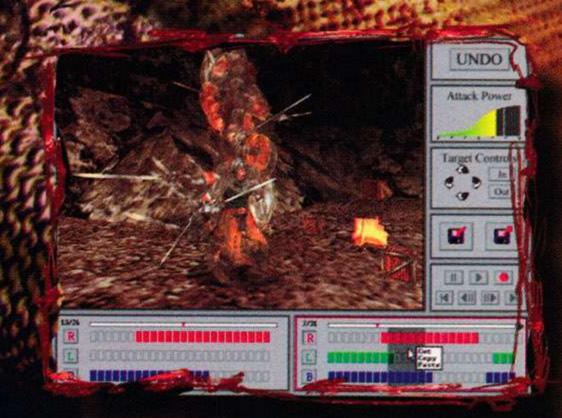
ESCAPE.

Hack your way through a savage world or head straight for the arena.









Create, store and trade killer custom moves with the versatile move editor.

Dismember, Massacre,

Complete Freedom of Movement. Precision Killing.

"We're not talking aboutyour standard run-and-gun four-player session here."

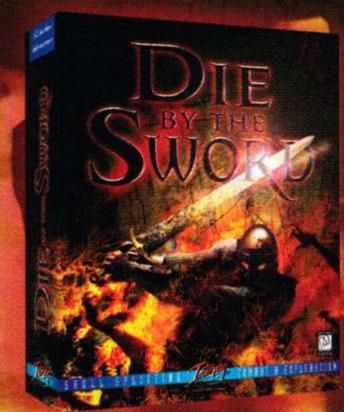
-Gamespot

"...will impact the way we play games forever."

-Next Generation

Now Available!

Lop off heads, sever limbs and bring your enemy to his knees (literally).



Download the demo from w.interplay.com/dbts

E-mail your feedback to the producer at dbts@interplay.com

The technically proficient follow up to one of the top selling PC racing games ever could do with a little more madness to liven up its uninspired gameplay.

Monster Truck Madness 2 is one of those titles that seems to have all the components for a successful game.

Graced with the type of superior graphics that is increasingly

On the surface, Microsoft

becoming common place on the PC, Monster

offers superbly modeled trucks clambering over fully navigable 3D environments. The best visual experience does require a high end PC with 3D acceleration, but there are graphics options that can be adjusted to provide a satisfactory game experience. Sound is average at best, with repetitive commentary and generic music, but the voice communication capability during head-to-head play is simply cool.

Where Monster Truck falls short is in the gameplay department. The racing action isn't overly fast or compelling, but this would have been acceptable had the developers opted to have



There are 11 new circuit and rally tracks, as well as three multiplayer tracks.



A range of environmental settings allow the player to race at night, or in rain, snow, or fog.

some fun and made it so the player could inflict some serious damage on opponents and objects in the environment.

There's enough here so that Monster Truck enthusiasts, gaming novices, and younger players can have fun, but there are better racing games available.

There are a number of different available camera angles, but only the cockpit view and a couple of the exterior views are usable during gameplay.



MTM2 offers nine trucks in addition to the 11 trucks from the first game

for a total of 20.





HEAD TO HEAD

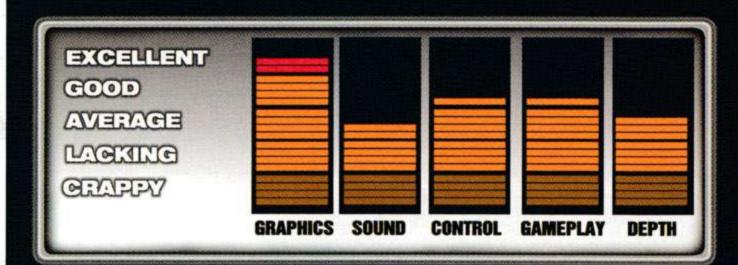
MINIMUM

Pentium 133 or better Windows 95, Windows 98, or Windows NT 4.0 w/ Service Pack 3 16MB RAM SVGA Monitor 4X CD-Rom Drive 30MB Available Hard Disk Space Sound Card 28.8Kbps Modem (for Internet Play)

RECOMMENDED

3D Accelerator Card 32MB RAM 6X CD-ROM Drive 110MB Available Hard Disk Space 56.6Kbps Modem (for Internet Play)

EQUALIZER





4X CD-Rom Drive

SVGA Video Card

Disk Space

8-bit Sound Card

RECOMMENDED

Disk Space

50MB Available Hard

3D Accelerator Card

100MB Available Hard

Pentium 133 or better

MINIMUM

Windows 95

32MB RAM

(I) Laurell Grand

High Heat Baseball
'99 isn't as fancy as most of
the PC Baseball games currently available, but it does a lot of
little things right that most
others don't.

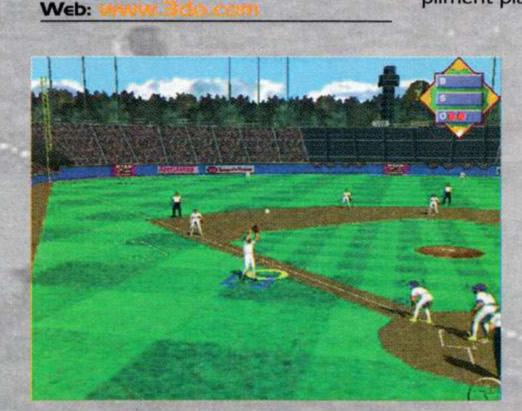
Since most PC games these days sport 3D polygonal graphics, it comes as a bit of a shock that High Heat Baseball '99 depicts its players utilizing good old fashioned 2D sprites.

Despite its
dated look, the use
of sprites in High
Heat allowed the
developer to avoid
a lot of the gameplay problems that
seem to plague 3D
Baseball games.

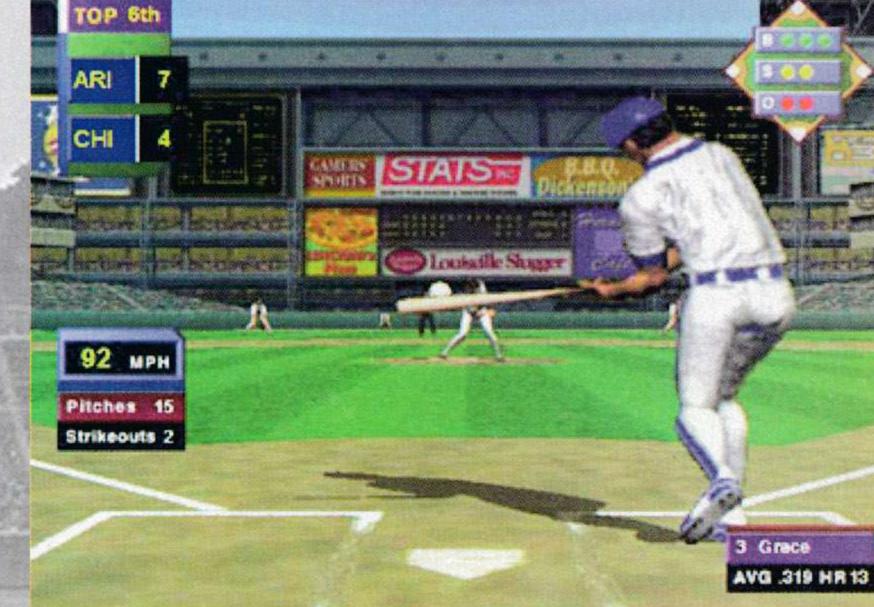
This low tech approach results in a game that plays a lot better than most of its 3D competitors. There are still a few problems in transitions between catching and throwing and player movement as

System: PC
Price: \$39.95
Genre: Sports
Players: Lor 2
ESRB rating: E (Everyone)
Recommended: Game Pad
Publisher: The 300 Company

Developer:



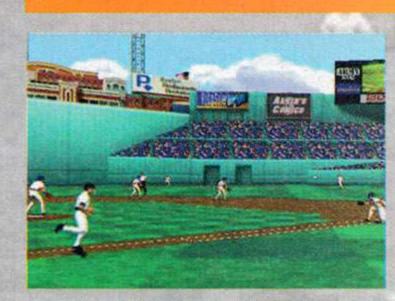
The camera angle in High Heat is simple, but effective and always seems to keep the view the optimum distance from the play.



a whole, but the arcade gameplay just seems to work better than most. The camera angles are actually well done in **High Heat**. The camera follows the ball consistently and gets close enough for satisfying detail, yet far enough away to compliment play making.

The ball physics and play mechanics in High Heat are well balanced. Runners rarely beat out a grounder to third and balls off the wall in the outfield usually earn a double. High Heat also offers stat engines and simulation modes.

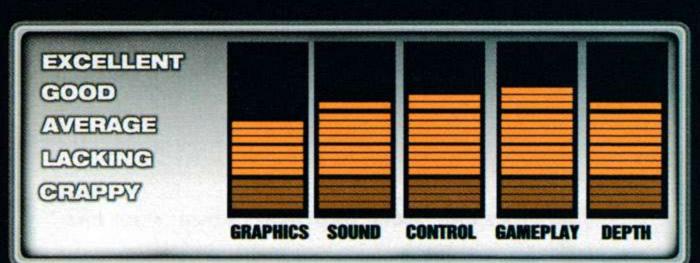
High Heat '99 is definitely a back to basics PC baseball game that doesn't offer the visual fireworks of other games, but in this case, it works for the better. The stadium environments in High Heat Baseball live up to current PC Baseball standards, but the 2D sprite-based players do not.

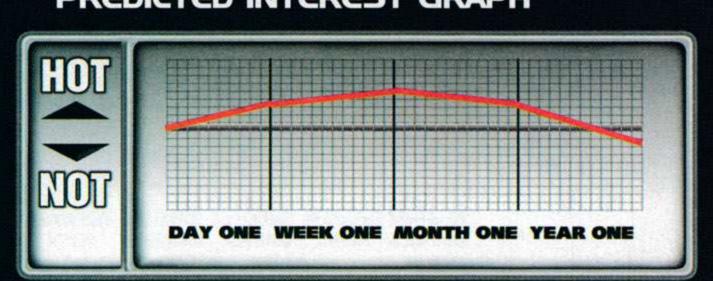


The lack of the MLB license for High Heat means that gamers will be playing in 'Boston Stadium' rather than Fenway Park.



EQUALIZER





OS Windows 3.X

33 MHz 486SX 2X speed CD Rom 8-bit digital sound

MIDI playback

640 x 480, 256 colors

MINIMUM

8 MB RAM

Even with the best intentions in story and cinema, Takeru still comes up too short in gameplay for the casual buck.

Based on the Japanese manga series of the same name and penned by artist/writer Buichi Terasawa (Cobra,

Midnight Eye

Gokuu) comes the cinematic Takeru: Letter of the Law. Your assumed identity within the game is of Takeru, a skilled warrior who falls in love with a

mysterious princess and must save her from a sinister sorceress. Takeru must find his way through temples, shrines and alleyways to complete each of his objectives. This is the first of a series of games that span the storyline of the actual comic.

Rendered sequences are nicely done, but don't really live up to modern standards in gameplay.

Not so much a game as a pseudo-interactive comic book, Takeru plays mainly like a mix between a beginner's Myst and Konami's Sega CD cult classic, Snatcher. For someone already familiar with Terasawa's work, the game excels, but as a true adventure title, there's little support to the claim.

The game is comprised of approximately 75% animated cinemas, and that means Takeru is much too short of a game and contains only the smallest amount of true interaction. This title is recommended only for

System: PC/Mac

Price:

Genre: Graphic Adventure

Players:

ESRB rating: T (Teen)

Publisher: Software Sculpto

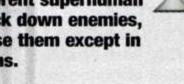
Developer:

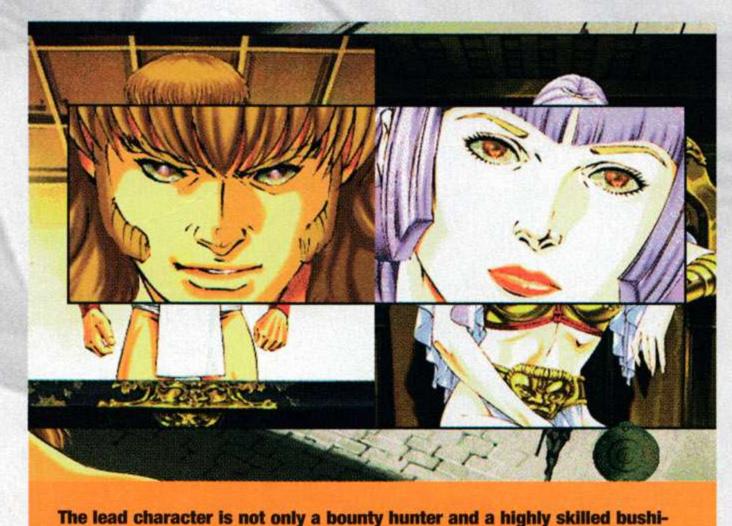
Web: www.softwaresculptors.com

the most hardcore fans of the series, who are willing to dish out the dough.



Takeru has different superhuman abilities to knock down enemies, but you can't use them except in certain situations.





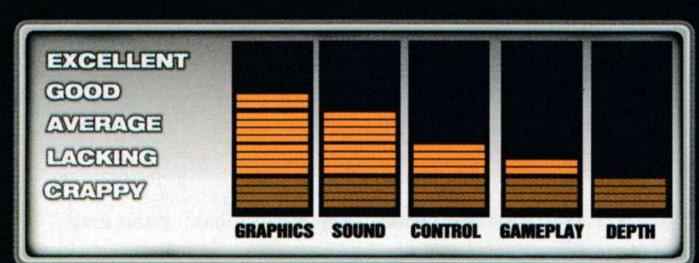
do warrior, but he's also a sucker for every lady in a G-string.



The Gateway option gives you the rundown on how the game was made and its content.



EQUALIZER





MINIMUM

Pentium 133

16 MB RAM

Windows 95

RECOMMENDED

DirectX

Pentium 2 32 MB RAM

3D Accelerator

(2)(四)(M)(高)(多)

Microsoft and Singletrac have teamed up to bring about an interesting combination of flying and shooting in a 3D environment in the form of

Outwars.

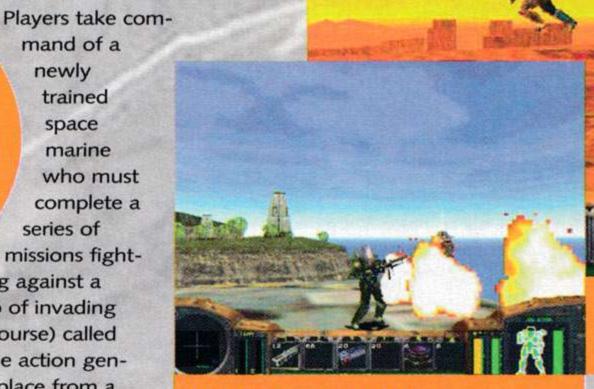
It's not flashy, but Microsoft's Outwars does offer some nice twists on the shooting genre in the form of its jet pack and glider mechanics.

mand of a newly trained space marine who must complete a series of missions fighting against a group of invading aliens (of course) called Hydrans. The action generally takes place from a

third-person perspective, with the player able to maneuver the camera by means of the mouse. In addition to moving the camera, the mouse can also affect the aiming point of the player's weapons. As one would expect, players can run around on the ground, or they can make use of their suit's jump jets and gliding capabilities.

Outwars boasts a dynamic soundtrack that is triggered by events. For example, you may be slinking along a dark corridor and the accompanying music is suitably suspenseful. When you then walk into a Hydran ambush, the score changes to a rousing symphony, just like a movie.

The levels themselves have both indoor and outdoor components. Either way, they are huge.

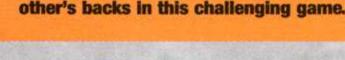


This training mission teaches you how to shoot and fly.

The missions start out easily enough, but the challenge level climbs drastically. The early missions in the game revolve around training, but quickly, the game's plot takes over, forcing players into conflict with the Hydrans.

Remember, the Marines are looking for a few good men.





You're often paired with an Al buddy or two

for your mission. You all have to watch each

System: PC Price:

Genre: Players: 1 to 8

ESRB rating: T (Teen)

Publisher: Microsoft

Developer: Singletrac

Web: www.microsoft.com

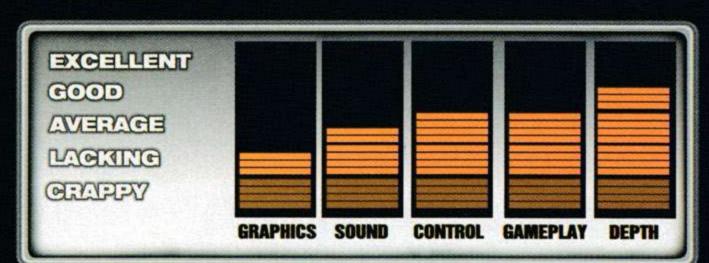


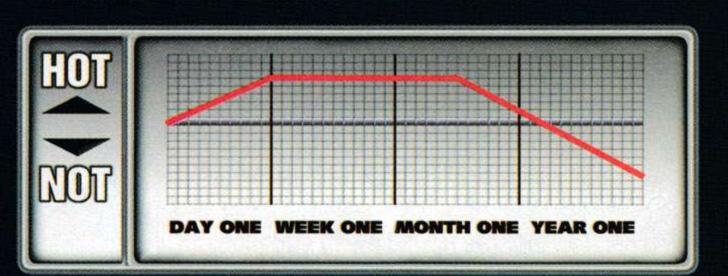


A pack of Hydrans are ready to corner you when you engage the jetpack.

Flying enemies will join you in the air. Be careful.

EQUALIZER









MINIMUM

Windows 95

Pentium CPU

16 MB RAM

(Direct X)

640X480, 256 colors

4 X speed CD-ROM

Direct X-type card

16 bit Sound Blaster or

Alta NG(6)

A crucially flawed gameplay concept leaves H+A's latest action adventure PC title all but

dead in the water.

virus, Ara NGC 6397 is
being marketed as a
interactive mix of
action and graphic
adventure. As
soon as you
begin the game,
you are thrown
into the heat of
one of the action
sequences, but
strangely, it's at that
same moment that the
game seems to fall apart.

Centered around the premise

of being trapped alone with-

in enemy confines and sub-

At the outset, you are placed in combat with several different enemies and your objective is to kill them off while protecting your partner, who is the only one able to deactivate a laser barrier blocking progress; but you won't realize this until you've played through the scenario at least three or four times. The action segments of the game can be confusing, but they are infinitely less frustrating than the puzzles. No directions are really given to you on how to progress and the actual puzzles are not so much illogical, as just really vague. If you happen to try your hand at a puzzle before you are able to solve it, you cannot go back and do it over again. You have to die, then restart the whole scenario

System: PC
Price: \$45.99
Genre: Action/Adventure
Players: |
ESRB rating: T (Teen)
Publisher: H + A
Developer: Artech
Web: www.h-plus-a.com



Action sequences are mainly point and click maneuvers, making the controls feel a little stiff at times.

over again. But, if you just happen to do everything correctly the first time through, the whole adventure only really lasts around 30 minutes at the most. Visually, Ara NGC 6397 is nicely rendered, but the gameplay design makes it nothing more than a pretty dud.



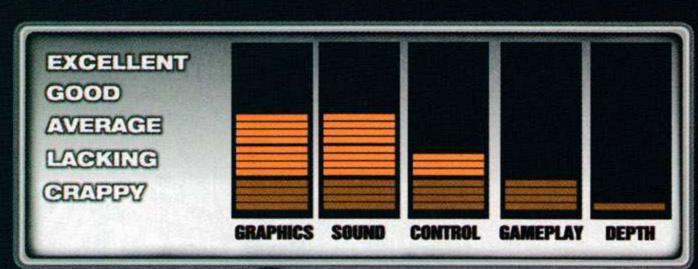


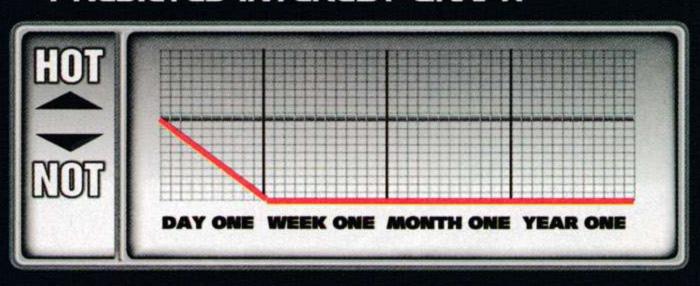
There are other strange activities to participate in other than shooting and solving puzzles.



Random items, like the bananas, have little to do with the game, but are collectable anyway.

EQUALIZER





My thing is Speed.

8 THRUST jets, 4 rudder jets

My stone goes like a scalded cat

move in QUICK strike fast and BLOW before they know what hit em.

ALL their FIREPOWER doesn't Mean ia CK

if they can't hit me.





Heavy FIREPOWER is for suckERs with small JOHNSons.

SUCKERS WITH SOLAR COLLECTORS and ALLS

Oh yeah, and about a dozen RAMMING Spikes. When my fortress POCKS your world, you'll know it.

Firepower, FIREPOWER and MOREficepower

This isn't a BRIDAL SHOWER it's WaR.

I'll take my chances with 4 doom bolt guns 2 dragstone LAUNCHERS and 3 SHOCkwave cannons.

TPUST me.

I got for you

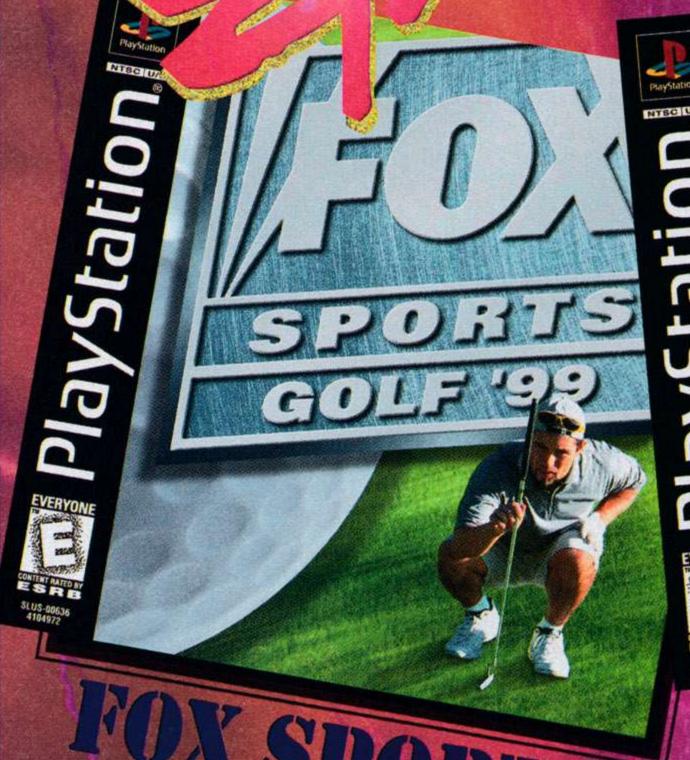
what kind of fortress will you build





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SpecOps promises to redefine strategic shooters with its amazing realism and 'grown-up' edge that makes gamers feel as if they truly are in the hot zone.

From a gameplay perspective,
SpecOps is an extremely well
crafted, mission-based shooter
with an emphasis on strategic
planning and weapon use,
rather than blasting

Players are a part of a two ranger team, that has to carry out specific mission objectives. There are several objectives for each operations and there are a

hearty number of operations in the game that will keep gamers busy for hours.

Sometimes missions are recon or sweep and destroy. Others are recovery and isolation. Either way, there's a lot to keep you busy.

On the graphics side of the house, the game is OK, but if you

have a 3Dfxbased 3D accelerator, you're really in for a graphical treat.

About the only aspect of the game that's better than the graphics is the audio, like the verbal abuse of your

angry opponents as they check out a nearby fire fight. Ambient sounds such as rain or crickets chirping are amazingly well done and truly make you feel like you're hiding in the forest, or hiking through the jungles on your mission.

About the only downside is that SpecOps is exceptionally difficult. Gamers with a lack of patience aren't likely to take the time to keep retrying missions that they continuously fail (and you



SpecOps has a series of alpine maneuvers as well. Better bring your mittens.



Blowing up the enemy's trucks is one of your first objectives.

will fail for a good long time before you get the hang of it). However, if you're up for a challenge, this could well be your game.



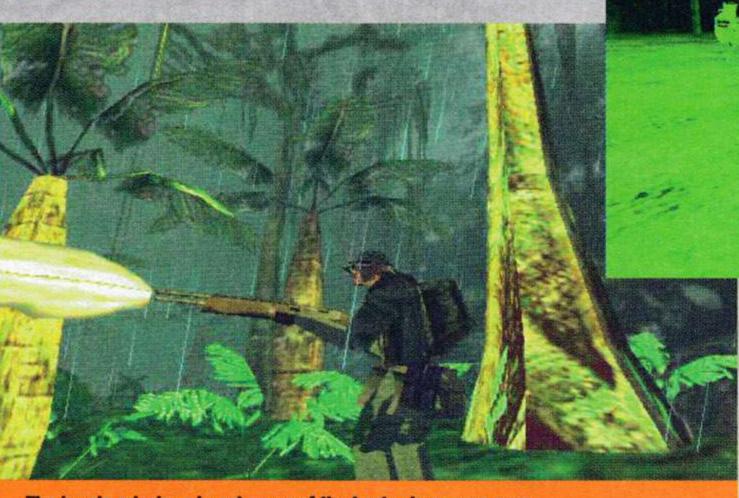
REQUIRES

MINIMUM

Pentium 166 or better 16 MB RAM Windows 95 DirectX

RECOMMENDED

Pentium 2 or better 32MB RAM 3D accelerator card Night vision goggles give you the ability to see everything from the tracer fire of your bullets to the beads of sweat pouring down your enemy's brow.



The jungle missions boast some of the best rain scenes ever.

System: PC

Price: 544.99

Genre: Action

Players:

ESRB rating: M (Mature)

Recommended: 3D accel. c

Publisher: Ripcord

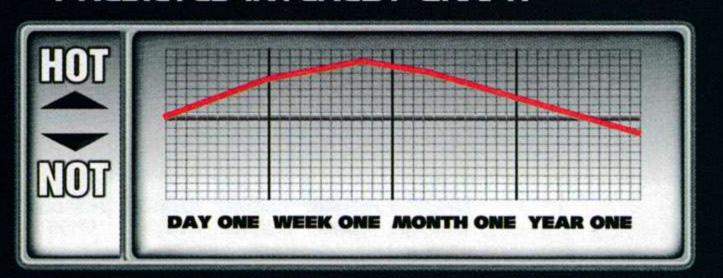
Developer: Zombie

Web: www.ripcordgames.com

EQUALIZER

EXCELLENT GOOD AVERAGE LACKING GRAPPY GRAPHICS SOUND CONTROL GAMEPLAY DEPTH

PREDICTED INTEREST GRAPH



SWEINS

Battle Arena

A conversion of the PlayStation fighter, Battle Arena Toshinden 2 for the PC offers arcade fun, but lacks the fluid gameplay exhibited in the console version.

REQUIRES

Pentium 133 MHz

4X CD Rom Drive

RECOMMENDED

3D Accelerator Card

Pentium 200 MHz

MINIMUM

Windows 95

16 MB Ram

Sound Card

32 MB Ram

Battle Arena Toshinden 2 was released on the PlayStation system almost two years ago, continuing a series that earned notoriety more in looks than in playability. This fighter

featured one-on-one combat

C7 4 1 4

rights as well.

in a 3D arena, each fighter wielding weaponry from whips to claws to

broadswords. Either whittle your opponent's life-force down to nothing, or force him (or her) off the edge of the

platform for a win. The PC version is a straightforward port of the console game, with much crisper graphics due to the higher resolution capabilities. The controls, the arebeen converted over to the

nas, and all eleven fighters have Windows 95 environment, but with the move to the PC comes the performance issue, and as always the case, the faster the computer, the better. Even with the ability to reduce detail on the game's 3D graphics, without a

have a digital gamepad, forget it. All eleven fighters from the original **PlayStation**

version have jumped into this

PC CD-Rom.

3D accelerator the game is

unplayable. And if you don't



BAT 2 stands among the best of the genre on the PC, but since the fighting market is very small on the PC side, that's really not saying much.

Winning the match also gives the victor gloating

Just because you have weapons doesn't mean you have to use them.

System: Price:

Genre:

Players: **ESRB** rating:

Recommended:

Publisher: Developer:

W∈b:

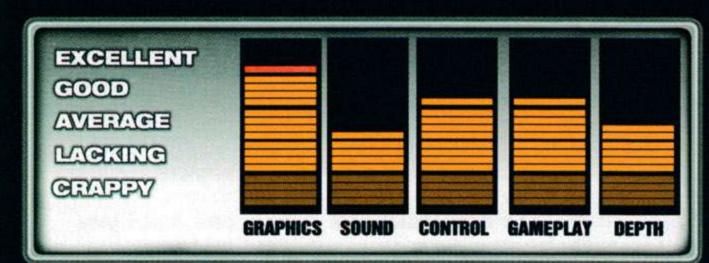


Sofia can utilize her whip in more ways than one, sending a powerful shockwave towards her foe.



Gala's firebreath is only effective at close range, but it sure packs a mean punch.

EQUALIZER







How To Select CD-ROMs For Your System.

All selections are available for PC only. Unless otherwise indicated, minimum system requirements are Windows '95 operating system, a 486/66 processor with 8MB RAM, SVGA display, sound card, 200 MB hard drive, 4X CD-ROM drive, mouse, and keyboard. DOS titles will run in Windows '95 DOS mode. Where indicated, J=Joystick, P=Printer, Pent=Pentium, and WC=Windows '95 Compatible selection.

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Forsaken is set on a future Earth that has been condemned following the total extinction of the human species. As one of sixteen bounty hunter/scavenger

If you've been looking to show off that new 3D and accelerator you just bought, the beautiful Forsaken could be just possible. what the doctor ordered.

types, the goal is to hop on a hover-bike snatch up as much booty as Of course, all of the good stuff has a full supply of robotic

defenders, so the mission won't be a cakewalk. The gameplay is pure

Beautiful lighting effects abound, especially when things blow up. action, taking its inspiration (quite liberally) from Descent, a six-degrees of freedom, tunnel-shooter from a few years back. The controls are completely configurable for keyboard and mouse or joystick/gamepad players, so coming to grips with mastering the bike is a snap. There are plenty of different weapons, power-ups, and enemies to keep the game entertaining through the 15 levels of gameplay.

Forsaken's graphics are quite attractive, with excellent use of

System: PC

Price: \$49.99

Players: 1 to 16

ESRB rating: M (Mature)

Developer: Probe Ent.

Recommended: 3D accel. card

Web: www.acclaimnation.com

cclaim Ent

Genre: Action

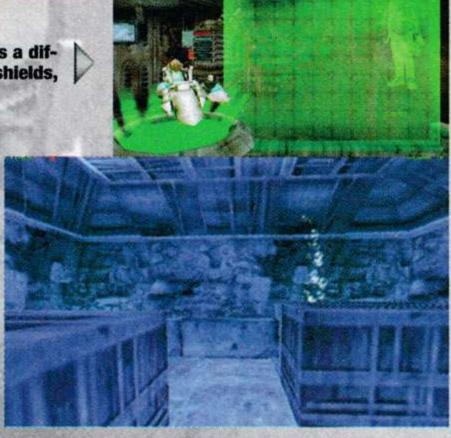
Publisher:

Each of the sixteen bikes has a different rating for things like shields, acceleration, etc.

colored lighting. The levels are well designed, and varied enough in appearance to hold the player's interest. The mechanical enemies are a bit bland, but the occasional rival biker appears to spice up the action.

The multi-player options feature team play, deathmatch, and several varieties of capture the flag, which give the game life beyond solo play. For fans of first-person shooters, Forsaken is a well-designed, good-looking game that will fully satisfy the itchy trigger finger.

Other bikers are also out to gain fame and fortune. They are formidable adversaries.



Nice touches abound, like altered sound effects for underwater locales.



REQUIRES

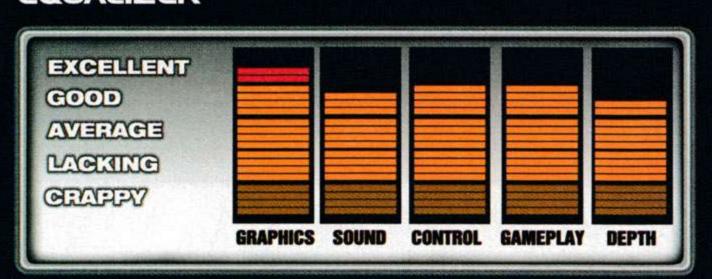
MINIMUM

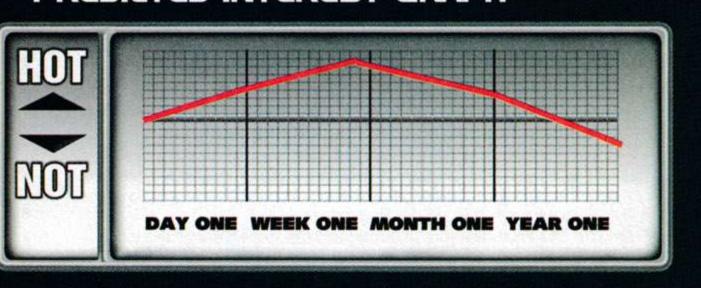
Pentium 133 or better Windows 95 with latest version of DirectX **16MB RAM 4X CD-ROM Drive**

RECOMMENDED

Pentium 166 for non-32MB RAM Direct3D compatible accelerator card Premium Soundcard

EQUALIZER





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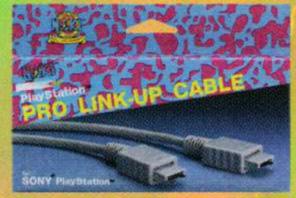
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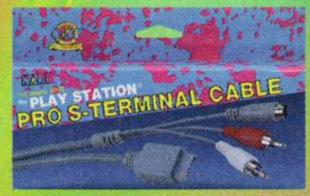
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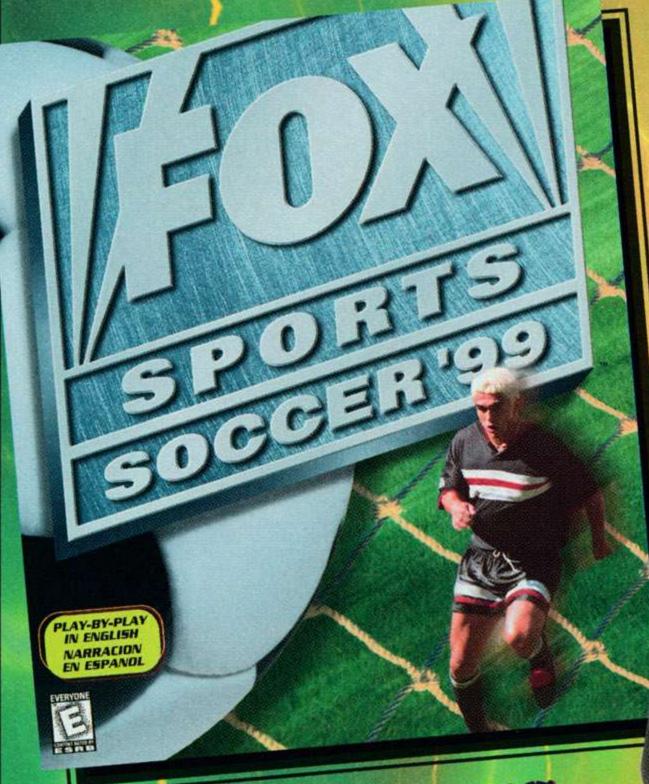
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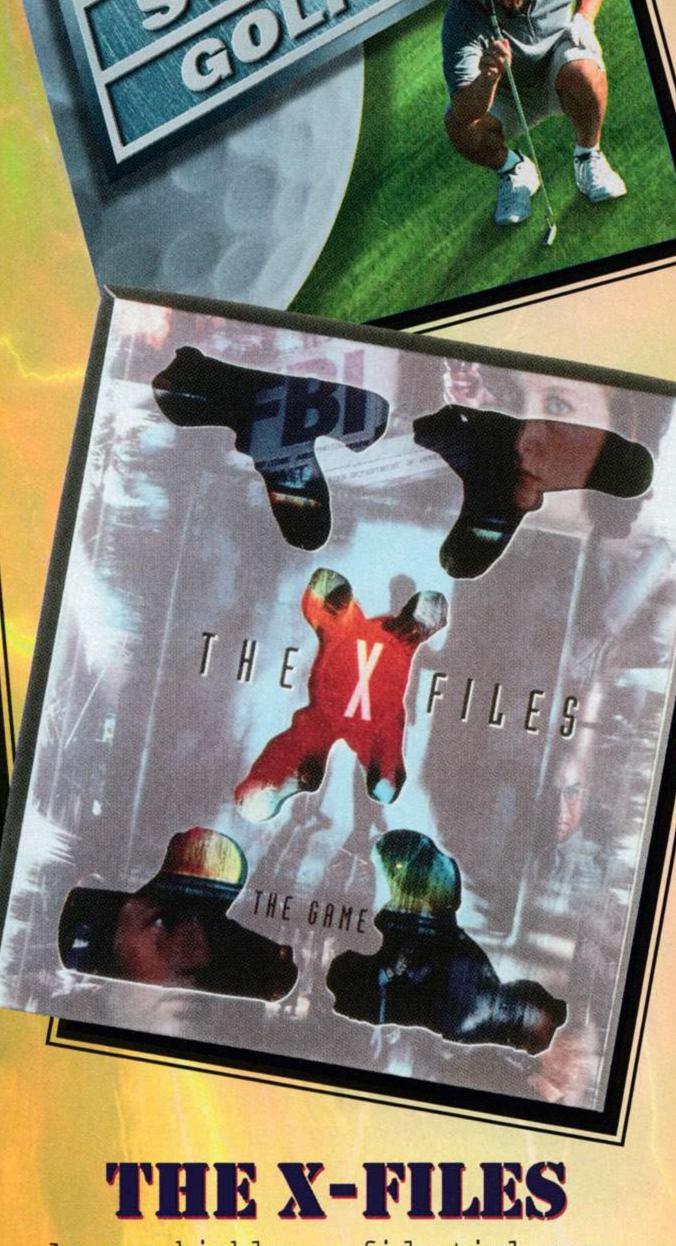
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Picking up the story where the strategy-based Heroes of Might and Magic II left off, Might and Magic VI: The Mandate of Heaven is an epic RPG gamers shouldn't go without.

Might and Magic, one of the most familiar computer RPG series, gets a massive overhaul with episode VI, and sets a new standard for other games to beat.

As the game begins, the Ironfist Dynasty is on the verge of collapse, and the citizens fear the king has lost his

divine right to rule. Naturally, there is an evil force at work and it is up to the player and his loyal band to restore the lost balance. You can fill your party with four of the six character classes available, including druids, paladins, sorcerers, knights, clerics, and archers.

New to Might and Magic VI is a combination of real-time and turn-based combat and movement. This combination offers the player complete freedom to explore the world without being overwhelmed by the rapid pace of combat. Also new is the improved magic system that breaks spells into nine categories, each suited for different healing, defensive and offensive needs.

The interface is simple and easy to use.

Previous Might and Magic games set the standards that other RPGs followed. Might and Magic VI continues the series' trend setting accomplishments with gorgeous 16 bit graphics, engaging sound, a detailed story line and over 100 hours of game play.



System:

Price:

Genre: Players:

ESRB rating:

Publisher:

Developer:

This town is your home base. Here you can

learn skills, heal, and hire non-player

characters to work for you.

W∈b:

might and magic vi allows complete freedom of movement above ground and in catacombs like this one.



Might and Magic VI is populated with a large number of enemies, including the difficult to kill Hydra.

REQUIRES

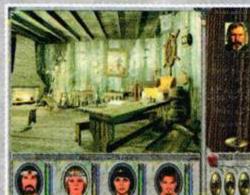
MINIMUM

Pentium 90 Windows 95/NT 16 MB of RAM 1 MB of VRAM 4x CD-Rom drive 170 MB HD space

EQUALIZER

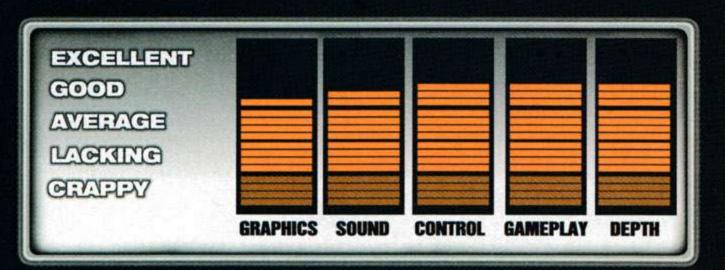
takes place between your party and nonplayer characters in places like the Anchors Away Inn.

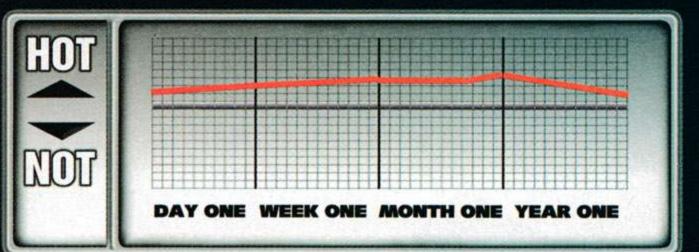
A lot of the interaction in the game





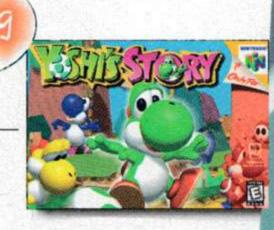






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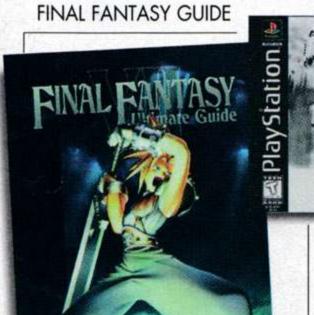
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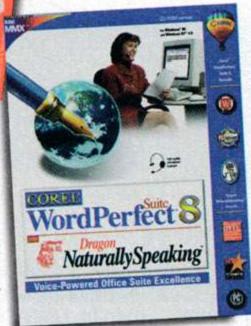
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Eight different choppers to choose from.



Seven types of weaponry, including five types of missiles.

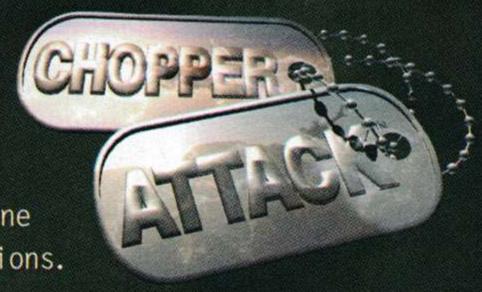


Mission 2: Rescue the hostages.



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Derivative or not? That is the question with Nintendo's latest 3D platformer, which comes wrapped in Rare's trademark wondrous technology on the game-starved N64.

HEAD TO HEAD

GAME: Super Mario 64

PUBLISHER: Nintendo

DEVELOPER: Nintendo

The classic status of the

groundbreaking debut

title on the N64 forced

hundreds of thousands

of gaming enthusiasts

to camp out on game-

obtain the N64, proving

successfully enter the

Banjo capitalizes on the

pioneered earlier on the

technology that Mario

N64 and runs with it.

The flat, shaded world

incredibly textured envi-

While gameplay is still

at a premium quantity

seems to have benefited

from the luxury of time

and experience with the

mascot favoritism, defi-

nitely comes out on top.

of Mario is now the

ronments of Banjo.

in both titles, Banjo

N64 and aside from

store doorsteps to

that Nintendo could

next generation of

gaming technology.

PRICE: \$39.99

Dream) and Conker's Quest (recently changed to Twelve Tales: Conker 64) as last year's surprise titles at E3, the news simultaneously delighted and disappointed N64 fans and owners. On one hand, platform fans everywhere rejoiced at the chance to perhaps revel in games

When Nintendo announced

(originally entitled Project:

both Banjo Kazooie

Mario 64, but crafted by master developers, Rare, best known for its Donkey Kong Country series on the SNES. Other, more critical system owners viewed the upcoming games as simply 'more of the same' and lashed out angrily across the Internet and videogaming magazine forums to voice their opinions about Nintendo's decidedly 'kiddy' approach to the videogame market. After all, a talking bird, a banjo-playing bear and a big-eyed squirrel might not be able to satiate the action-packed urges of an emerging set of older, more mature gamers who were already used to the PlayStation's brand of pop culture, sex, and violence.

modeled after the

already legendary Super

Current N64 owners are about ready for anything at this point after suffering through over a year of countless software and hardware delays (Zelda 64, 64DD, Robotech). The seemingly long-lasting glory of games like San Francisco Rush, Goldeneye 007, and Super Mario 64 isn't always enough to sustain the life of a system in dire need of some new blood. And it's at this opportune time during N64's impending middle age that Banjo Kazooie finally arrives in stores, a full year after it was first previewed. But the

polygonal movies can work just as Rare shows a little programming

real surprise is that the game not only shines as one of the true second generation showcase titles for the N64, but makes its mark as a solid competitor in gameplay, graphics and sound not only against its most obvious predecessor, Super Mario 64, but also

muscle with BK's extensive intro.

continued on page 88

Banjo Kazooie has a singular way of creating an incredibly precise feeling of depth, size and space.

A LITTLE TOMB RAIDING

well as CG-rendered cinemas.

Banjo Kazooie shows that real-time

System: N64

Price: \$59.99

Genre: Platform

Players:

ESRB rating: € (Everyone)

Recommended: Rumble Pak

Publisher: Nintendo

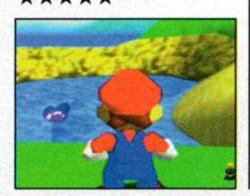
Developer: Rare

Web: www.nintendo.com



Multiple tasks will be presented to you in each of the nine worlds. Some will take return visits to complete.

SUPER MARIO 64 ****



The desert level

requires you to connect paired symbols in order to enter different pyramids.









Derivative or not? That is the question with Nintendo's latest 3D platformer, which comes wrapped in Rare's trademark wondrous technology on the game-starved N64.

HEAD TO HEAD

GAME: Super Mario 64 PUBLISHER: Nintendo DEVELOPER: Nintendo PRICE: \$39.99

The classic status of the groundbreaking debut title on the N64 forced hundreds of thousands of gaming enthusiasts to camp out on gamestore doorsteps to obtain the N64, proving that Nintendo could successfully enter the next generation of gaming technology. Banjo capitalizes on the technology that Mario pioneered earlier on the N64 and runs with it. The flat, shaded world of Mario is now the incredibly textured environments of Banjo. While gameplay is still at a premium quantity in both titles, Banjo seems to have benefited from the luxury of time and experience with the N64 and aside from

SUPER MARIO 64

mascot favoritism, definitely comes out on top.



(recently changed to Twelve Tales: Conker 64) as last year's surprise titles at E3, the news simultaneously delighted and disappointed N64 fans and owners. On one hand, platform fans everywhere rejoiced at the chance to perhaps revel in games modeled after the already legendary Super

When Nintendo announced

(originally entitled Project:

both Banjo Kazooie

Dream) and Conker's Quest

developers, Rare, best known for its Donkey Kong Country series on the SNES. Other, more critical system owners viewed the upcoming games as simply 'more of the same' and lashed out angrily across the Internet and videogaming magazine forums to voice their opinions about Nintendo's decidedly 'kiddy' approach to the videogame market. After all, a talking bird, a banjo-playing bear and a big-eyed squirrel might not be able to satiate the action-packed urges of an emerging set of older, more mature gamers who were already used to the PlayStation's brand of pop culture, sex, and violence.

Mario 64, but crafted by master

Current N64 owners are about ready for anything at this point after suffering through over a year of countless software and hardware delays (Zelda 64, 64DD, Robotech). The seemingly long-lasting glory of games like San Francisco Rush, Goldeneye 007, and Super Mario 64 isn't always enough to sustain the life of a system in dire need of some new blood. And it's at this opportune time during N64's impending middle age that Banjo Kazooie finally arrives in stores, a full year after it was first previewed. But the

Banjo Kazoole shows that real-time polygonal movies can work just as well as CG-rendered cinemas.

scle with BK's extensive intro.

real surprise is that the game not only shines as one of the true second generation showcase titles for the N64, but makes its mark as a solid competitor in gameplay, graphics and sound not only against its most obvious predecessor, Super Mario 64, but also

continued on page 88



Banjo Kazooie has a singular way of creating an incredibly precise feeling of depth, size and space .

in each of the nine worlds. Some will take return visits to complete.

System: N64

Price: \$59.99

Genre: Platform

Players: |

ESRB rating: **€** (**€**veryone)

Recommended: Rumble Pak

Publisher: Nintendo

Developer: Rare

Web: www.nintendo.com



A LITTLE TOMB RAIDING

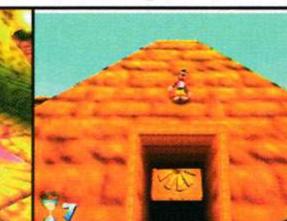
paired symbols in order to enter different pyramids.













086









continued from page 86

the best that the PlayStation has to offer.

Following the usual platform storyline antics, the game
begins once you learn that
Grunhilda, a very bad, very
green witch has
kidnapped Banjo's longtime
sweetheart. After pairing up
with a surprisingly
smart-mouthed bird named
Kazooie, it's off to the Witch's
Lair to reclaim Banjo's girlfriend
(who looks suspiciously similar
to Crash Bandicoot's sister, CoCo)
from the clutches of Grunhilda.

The team of Banjo and Kazooie make for some very interesting encounters and gameplay in that together they share responsibilities for pulling off combined moves that work both offensively (attacking) and defensively (running). To progress through each of the nine massive worlds, you'll need to learn a set amount of moves for the level you are currently on. These moves are acquired and unlocked only after you've spoken to a specific mole character who remains hidden deep

Visually, Banjo Kazoole is a stunner, with deep rich textures across every surface.

underground until you stumble upon one of several well-placed burrowing holes on the level. He then gives you a quick tutorial on how to perform a new move and then gives you hints on how to use it to solve different puzzles or to pass certain obstacles. It's a system that works quite well and with moves that you learn in later worlds, you are able to return to earlier ones in order to reach previously inaccessible areas. OK, so it's not the most original element to show up in a platformer (see Crash, Crash 2, Super Mario 64, Gex: Enter the Gecko, etc.),



The search for puzzle pieces will have you racing against the clock during various sub-games.







but it's a standard feature that Rare has fine-tuned to keep gameplay from stumbling into the rut of being annoyingly linear.

Visually, **Banjo** is a stunner.
With deep, rich textures across
every surface and some of the most
fluid character animations seen in a
platformer, it's little wonder why
this title took Rare so long to dish
out to the public. They've been
hard at work, discovering all the
little technical things inside the N64
that would make this game
something to stop and stare at.

Completely three dimensional environments, with subtle fade out in the distance to avoid those

embarrassing pop-up objects, are quite a feat for any developer on

the N64. On levels like Treasure Trove Cove, where you are able to fly just about

anywhere on the map, certain features like the almost obligatory lens flare (a nifty visual trick developers like to use whenever they want to recreate the experience of looking at the sun), gigantic level designs, and virtually absolute 3D freedom are truly appreciated. Visuals are meant to immerse you in gameplay, not distract you with either sighs of pleasure or pain and Banjo Kazooie does this job nicely, (though the rampant textures at certain times,

like in the desert world, seem to scream out 'The developers figured out how to do a really neat design trick, so they want

Kazooie makes like a real bird and is able to take Banjo to greater heights once you learn the right move. to beat you over the head with it!').

The dramatically dynamic soundtrack of the game really boosts the overall experience during gameplay, as well. Each area has its own unique, largely enjoyable track which fades in and out depending on where you are on the level. If you plunge underwater, expect the music and all other sounds to become muffled. Likewise, if you step into a room while on a certain level, you can also expect either a variation

on that area's specific theme or you'll notice the muffling effect, once again. It's these small nuances that seem to really display the amount of TLC that went into making this game.

One of the more problematic areas of 3D platformers has always been control of the camera. Improving the weaknesses found in other games in the same genre, **Banjo** manages to mostly overcome the flaws of difficult camera angles and manual controls. The C buttons on the



The giant gorilla on the first level will be your first true challenge in the game. Learning how to use your resources and inventory of moves is key to surviving.



EXCELLENT
GOOD
AVERAGE
LACKING

CENTERY

GRAPHICS SOUND CONTROL GAMEPLAY DEPTH

088

Rare Treat

Originally formed by residing brothers, Chris and Tim Stamper, the company began its career as Ultimate PlayTheGame, making games for the 8-bit Sinclair Spectrum in the U.K. Once they began developing for the NES in '86, they changed their name to Rare and made the racing phenom, RC Pro Am. The rest is, as we say, history.

BEGINNER BEAR'S LUCK

After the initial level, you'll be able to enter an area that will ease you into the game. An intro to collecting musical notes, honey combs, and Mumbo tokens, there aren't too many tough enemies and you'll learn several more important skills to use later.



controller allow you to swing the camera around to any angle, while the R button is useable as a 'first person' view when you need to navigate certain areas more carefully. But the openness of each

Where Banjo really does shine, though, is in its gameplay.

level and a more intelligent camera system make following Banjo around different areas much less cumbersome than in most 3D platformers.

Where Banjo really does shine, through, is in its gameplay. Unbelievably easy to pick up and play, the game neither intimidates the most novice player nor aggravates the veteran platformer by being too easy. Multiple moves for completing different tasks, several different sets of items to continually collect throughout each area, as well as huge, massive worlds that continually offer new areas to explore upon each visit makes for a long, involving challenge that tests gaming skills and entertains at the same time. Level designs are clever, vast and literally teeming with loads of goodies to gather

and secret nooks to discover. The pace of the game is kept up by the variety of enemies you'll encounter in each area, challenging you to dig into your bag of tricks to find the correct attack to dispatch of each

new foe.
Defeating
enemies will
reward you with
honeycombs (see

Bear Eating Habits) to replenish lost life points, which you're never really short of. Therefore the real test of skill in **Banjo** is figuring out puzzles and how to progress, rather than merely relying on a simple pattern for destroying bad guys. The result is an addictive, tried and true combination of exploration, discovery and good old fashioned platforming wackiness.

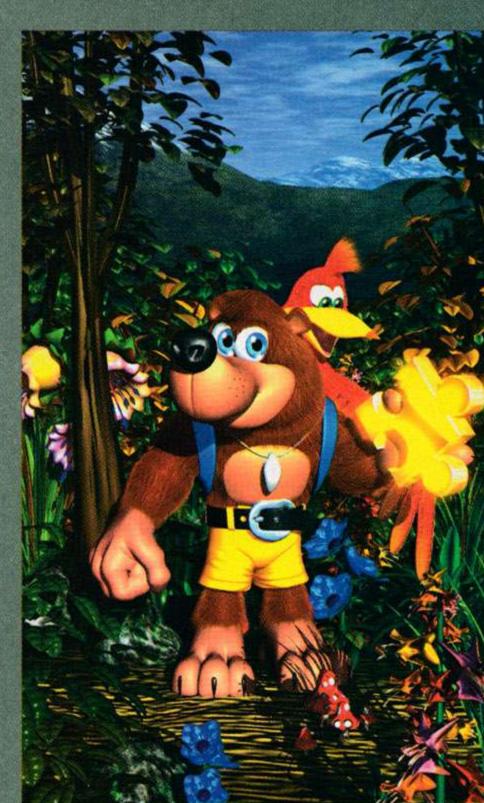


HOT DAY ONE WEEK ONE MONTH ONE YEAR ONE

Un-bear-ably Cute

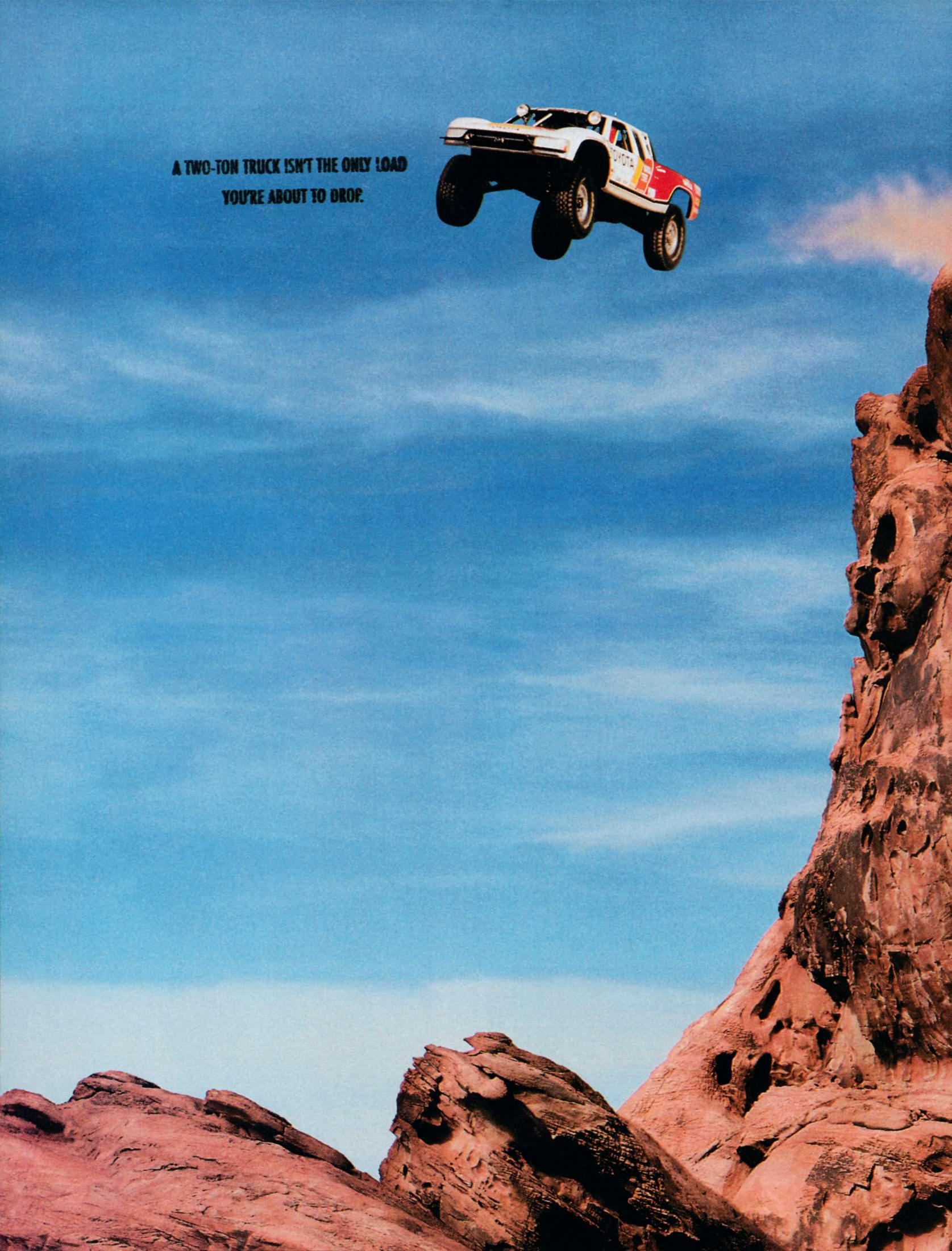
But what of the guns and girls? Are there any titillating moments of gleeful violence? You certainly won't find anything of the sort in this game, but with such a skeptical eye placed on

Nintendo titles, due to what can be called the tyrannical cuteness of fluffy fiascoes like Yoshi's Story and Diddy Kong Racing, it's hard to defend Banjo. The sounds that each character emits throughout the game can only really be described as cutesy, nonsensical utterances and the fuzzy animal theme might be too disturbingly adorable for those more inclined to clutch a copy of Goldeneye to their hearts. But since when did any mascot-type platformer ever try to be thematically sophisticated or mature, anyways? While the mass appeal of a mascot character does have the ability to make or break a title, the real basis in judging a platformer is the quality of its gameplay and Banjo has that category locked down.



Seeing 120 Stars?

The most crippling argument that Banjo is particularly vulnerable to is the claim that the game is nothing more than a 'Mario clone', with a backwoods bear in the lead role instead of a squat mustachioed plumber. Arguing for Banjo as an incredibly unique and innovative title is not exactly the right position to take, simply because it owes too much to Super Mario 64 for the game's blatantly derivative aspects to be ignored. But what Banjo does accomplish is a high level of quality by improving all the flawed features Mario suffered from (confusingly open ended level designs, wacky cameras, etc.) while capitalizing on the strengths that made it so great to begin with. Innovation goes hand in hand with quality, and though Banjo falters slightly in the first category, there's no doubt that it excels in all others, making the game a worthy heir to the lofty platform crown.





When you look at the Nintendo 64's game library, you won't find many puzzle games, but there is a new mindbending title on the way that is so good it makes up for the lack.

The Nintendo 64 is dammed. Dammed up that is, with Ocean's watery, and highly addictive, high speed puzzle game.

Wetrix is another twist on the falling blocks model that Tetris pioneered so successfully. The objective is

to create a dam to keep as much falling water as possible on your playing field. It sounds easy enough, but earthquakes, falling bombs, and a relentless series of falling blocks makes it a challenge even for the most experienced puzzle gamer.

Wetrix has several game modes to provide a lot of playing time. The Classic Mode is the main game. Keep the water from spilling and build up points. Wetrix Pro is a more difficult version. The Challenge mode has

Handicap mode starts you out with gaping holes in your play board that you must fill before water starts falling.

Two player mode is where it's at in Wetrix, with heart pounding speed and chilling attacks, like this Ice Attack. several time attacks, requiring

you to survive a minute or five minutes. Sixty seconds never felt this long before. Perhaps the best way to play

Wetrix, though, is with a friend. The two player versus mode is absolutely addictive and, once you've mastered the basics of the game, competitive play will drive you insane in your efforts to keep from leaking water.

Like many puzzle games, it

System: Nintendo 64

You even get a rubber ducky...

Price: \$54.95 Genre: Puzzie Players: I or 2

ESRB rating: E (Everyone) Publisher: Ocean/Infogrames

Developer: Zed Two Web: www.infogrames.com

takes a while to get used to Wetrix's game mechanics, but once you do, you'll find Wetrix is on of the best puzzle games to come out for any of the current generation of consoles.



Fireballs fall periodically to evaporate your collected water and raise your score, or in two player games, advance your attack meter.

HEAD TO HEAD

TETRISPHERE **PUBLISHER: Nintendo** SYSTEM: Nintendo 64

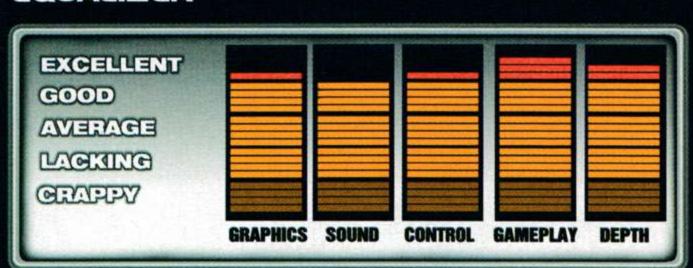
The first real puzzle game for the Nintendo 64 was Tetrisphere, a block dropping, 3D version of the classic Tetris. Good music, lots of play modes, power ups, and an exciting two player vs mode made for an excellent playing experience. Although Tetrisphere is a good two player game, the puzzle mode, a brain twisting challenge of moving and dropping a specific number of blocks, is its most interesting and novel feature.

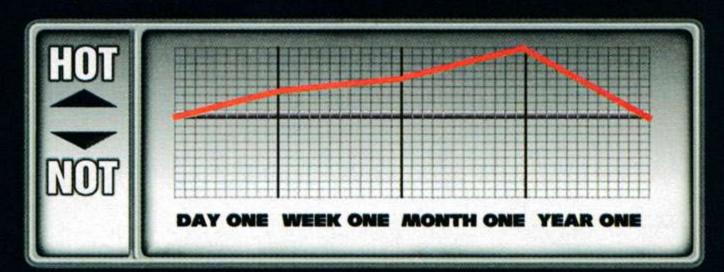
TETRISPHERE





EQUALIZER





IT'S NOT A MASK

IT'S A MUZZLE

YOU TAKE .

YOU STEAL.

YOU SLUG.

YOU CRUSH.

YOU HIT AND RUN.

YOU TRY TO BEAT THE HEAT.

AND AT THE END OF IT ALL SOME GUY IN A MASK TRIES TO

TAKE YOU DOWN TO PROTECT HIS HOME.

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MIKE PIAZZA CATCHER, LA DODGERS



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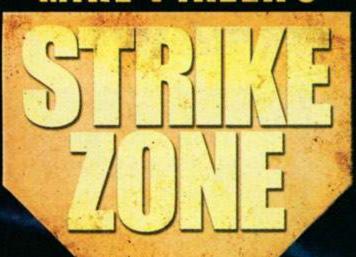


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MIKE PIAZZA'S



DIG IN.























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Marketed as a role-playing 'adventure,' Quest 64 has been hotly anticipated since its announcement. THQ's acquisition of Quest 64 comes at an incredibly opportune time in the N64's

It's definite that TH•q
beat out Nintendo's vaporous
Zelda by date, but does it have
what it takes to go the gameplay
distance as the N64's
first RPG?

lifespan, but it doesn't mean that it will actually live up to every hope of every N64 owner.
But the game's shortcomings are reighed by the mere

outweighed by the mere fact that not only is this the first and only real RPG available for the system, but it's also a decent, if not standard, stab at the genre.

What Quest gives the player is a fully 3D, adventure-type environment in which to guide around a young magician named Brian. You must travel to far off kingdoms in search of your father. Character development is kept to a minimum, while the graphics throughout the game are smoothly textured with an incredibly deep view in the distance, which heightens the genuine feel of traveling on foot.

The towns are given their own unique visual details, which make Quest a graphic treat from time to time.



The fighting system in Quest is closest to the one in Square's upcoming Parasite Eve; turn-based, but still allowing character movement.

4 8 9 9

Escape

Quest still ends up feeling like a 'beginner's RPG', with an emphasis on adventure rather than role-playing. RPG fans may want to approach this as more of a step in the right direction than an attempt at surpassing Final Fantasy VII or Zelda, but it still stands as a decent outing into RPG territory on the N64.



The different magic categories will take some time to build up and master, but remain the most important features in completing the game.

that will restore peace to the land.

The real core of the quest will have

you scrambling across different lands

to claim back the four elemental orbs

System: Nintendo 64

Price: \$59.99

Genre: RPG/Adventure

Players: |

ESRB rating: **€** (**€**veryone)

Recommended: Memory pak

Publisher: THea

Developer: Imagineer

Web: www.thq.com



MYSTICAL NINJA

HEAD TO HEAD

The closest competitor to

Quest would most likely

Goemon titles. The latest

MYSTICAL NINJA

SYSTEM: N64

STARRING GOEMON

PUBLISHER: Konami

be Konami's wacky

in the string of these

Mario-esque games,

Mystical Ninja Starring

Goemon finally arrived

Though not as involved

as its predecessors, it does give N64 owners

the chance to try their

ferent. Mystical Ninja should appeal to those with a taste for the more

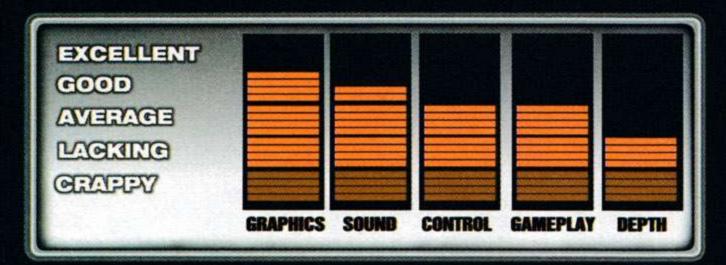
bizarre than Quest 64.

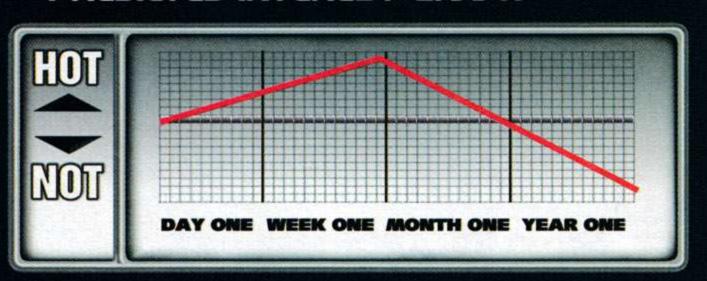
hands at something dif-

on US shores in April.



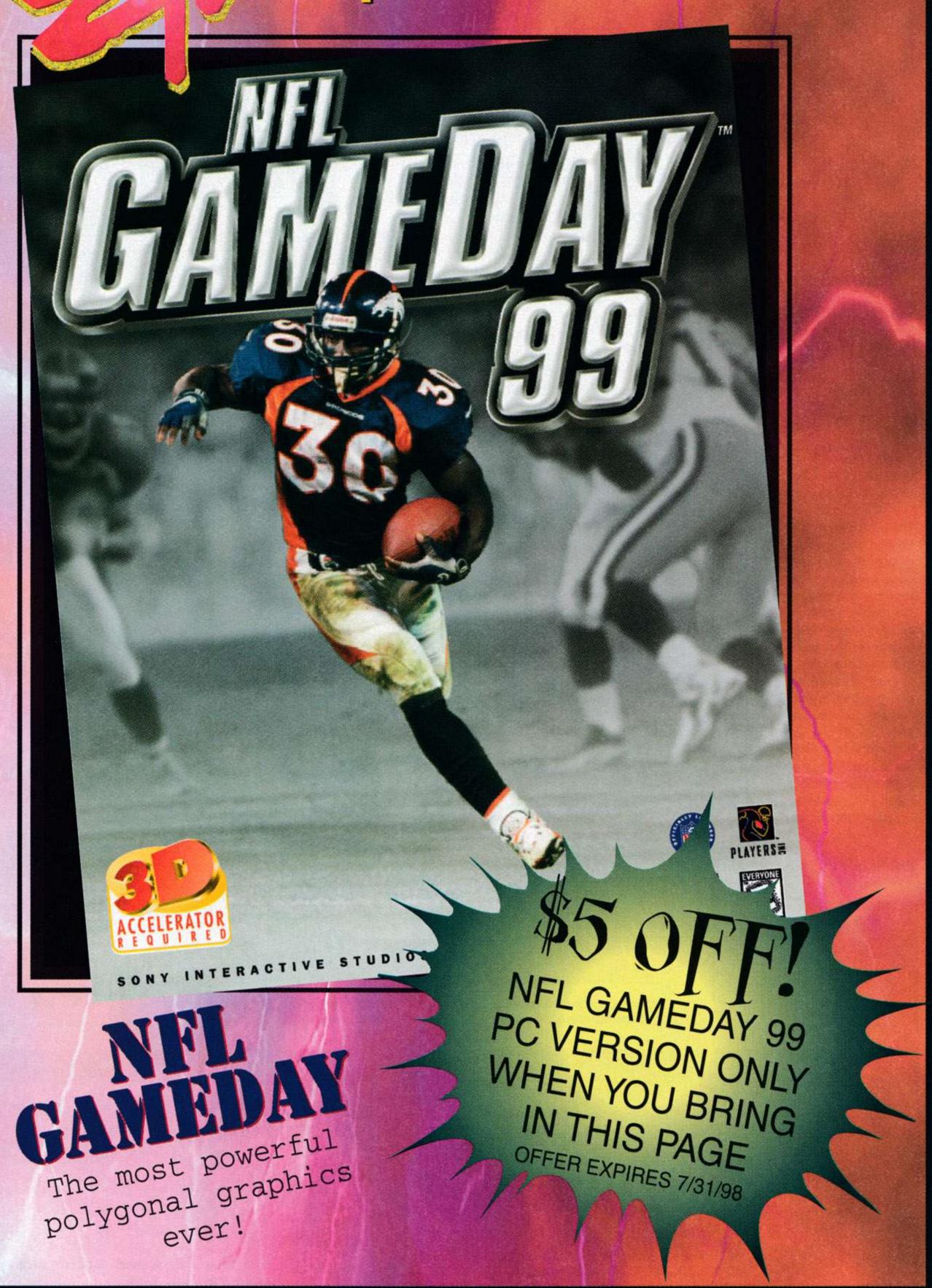
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HEAD TO HEAD

GAME: Extreme G

PUBLISHER: Acclaim

The Nintendo 64 is

flooded with racing

games, but only one

other futuristic racer -

the Tron-bike inspired

Extreme G: a high speed,

combat racing title with

great graphics, but only

Extreme G's craft design

average game play.

is uninspired, but the

courses and weaponry

includes a four-player

mode. If you want a

more action oriented

consider Extreme G.

racer, you might want to

keep you playing, and it

SYSTEM: Nintendo 64

If you're tired of waiting for WipeOut 64 or F Zero X and you really want a futuristic racer now, ASCII's AeroGauge may just be the game you're looking for.

AeroGauge is a straight up racing game with anime influenced craft to pilot through some rather devious track designs. Courses routinely have 90 degree turns and huge variations in alti-

tude.
Naturally,
each craft
has different
speed, acceleration and handling abilities, but
unlike so many games
where the craft look alike

AeroGauge craft all look radically different and you can almost perceive their strengths and weaknesses by their appearance.

or very similar, the

ASCII designed the game by the numbers. It's got time attacks, two player mode, a grand prix and an arcade style

System: Nintendo 64

Price: \$59.99 Genre: Racer

Players: I or 2

ESRB rating: T (Teen)

Publisher: Ascii
Developer: Ascii

Web: www.ascilent.com

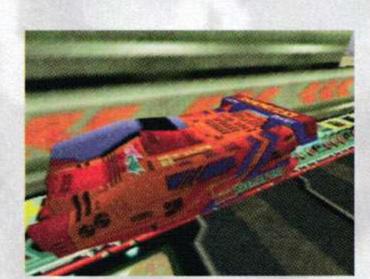
As the fog pulls back, you can see the graphics being drawn in.

single race. Before you can brave grand prix AeroGauge racing, you should master each track in the single race. The courses are extremely difficult and your opponents always seem to fly the fastest path.

You can use the walls of tunnels to pick up

speed or get around an opponent.

Unfortunately, AeroGauge is only an average racer. Even with hidden tracks, there aren't enough to encourage you to play the game for long, and if you make the effort to master a ship



Most of the ships, like this one, defy the laws of aerodynamics.



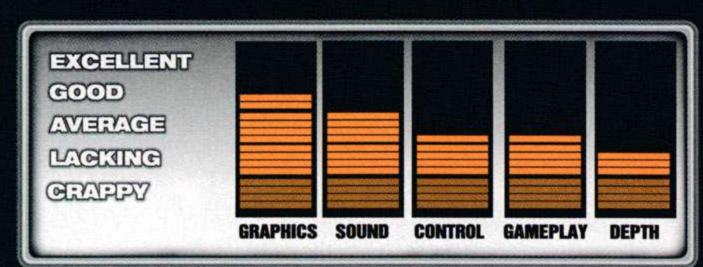
Many of the courses feature sharp, 90 degree turns.

(which takes a very long time) there's little incentive to master any others. Still, N64 owners waiting for F Zero X can satisfy their craving with AeroGauge.





EQUALIZER



PREDICTED INTEREST GRAPH



REVIEWS

REVIEW

Forsaken54

Call it a Descent-clone
if you like, but Acclaim
continues its streak of impressive Nintendo 64 games with a
beautiful shooter with
few flaws.

CLONES

GAME: Descent PUBLISHER: Interplay SYSTEM: PC, PlayStation

Forsaken is directly inspired by the granddaddy of free-3D shooters, Descent. Although Interplay at one point confirmed its plans to bring the series to Nintendo 64, it is now pooling resources for the game's latest PC incarnations, Descent: FreeSpace and Descent III. Since the series is not expected to make its entry on the N64 any time soon, Forsaken is currently without competition on the console.

DESCENT ****



of most first-person shooter with unrestricted movement in all three dimensions.

Players pilot fully armed

Players pilot fully armed hover bikes through a post-nuclear world

of dark corridors and mine shafts, taking out robot probes, and finding exits.
The game packs a good mixture of

action and exploration, not to mention incredible graphics effects at lightning fast speeds. Thanks to the diverse missions, the one-player mode offers enough variety to make Forsaken stand out, but that's not where most of the game's strengths lie.

This slick 3D shooter has one of the smoothest and most enjoyable multi-player modes on the N64. Acclaim didn't forget to include a fair selection of battle options and even computer-controlled bots that stand in for human players. However, the lack of a radar screen, map, or lock-on cues, along with an often annoyingly simplistic techno soundtrack, puts a damper on this otherwise well-designed title.

Forsaken delivers excellent

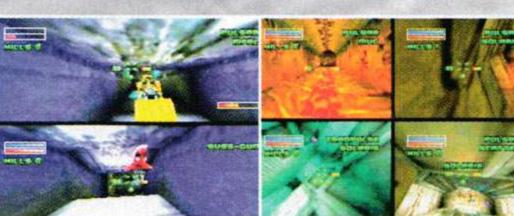
Forsaken does for Descent what Turok did for Doom: It borrows basic gameplay elements from a classic and adds the latest technological tricks.

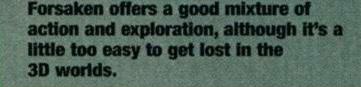
> gameplay and replay value even for gamers spoiled by Rare's and Nintendo's offerings.



Iguana UK successfully brings Probe's 3D shooter to life on N64 - with full four-player support.

Forsaken 64 once and for all ends the myth that multi-player games on the N64 involve foggy, jerky graphics.





System: Nintendo 64

Price: \$54.99

Genre: Action/Shooter

Players: I to 4

ESRB rating: M (Mature)

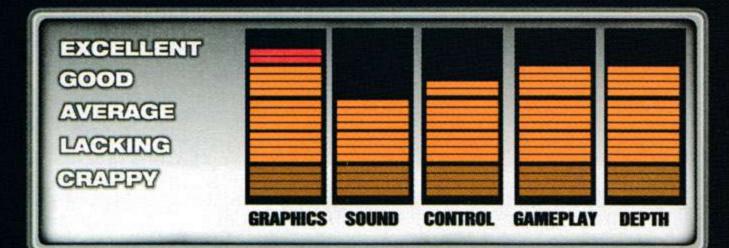
Recommended: Rumble Pak

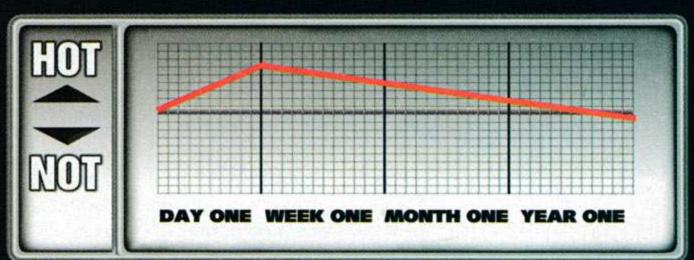
Publisher: Acclaim

Developer: Iguana UK
Web: www.acclaimnation.com



EQUALIZER





REVIEW >

The team that

play make 1080 amazing.

created WaveRace has

done it again. Marvelous use

Snowboardi

Nothing stirs the blood like a new epic from Nintendo, and epic is pretty much the only way to describe 1080

Snowboarding. The winter sport of the future is growing at a phenomenal rate, and Nintendo seems to have caught of the analog stick, inventive the wave at its tracks, and plenty of that good old fashioned Nintendo gamezenith. Although most of the snow will have melted by the time you read this, you'll be able to plug in a

> Nintendo controller and relive (or experience for the first time) the thrill of coasting

down a mountain, with only your skill between you and a messy death.

1080 is structured in a similar fashion to Waverace. You can select several options in the first place, but you have to 'open' new courses by completing the races in order. This can prove frustrating at first when you want to check out different slopes, but provides much needed impetus for game progress.

The tracks range from the simple to the absurd. Snowboarding down a snowcovered slope is one thing, but leaping over cars and barreling through city streets is quite another. This variety, of course, is something that's definitely missing from Winter Heat and Cool Boarders, the game's closest rivals. It must be said at this point, that both those games excellent as they are - can't hold a candle to this beauty.

Not only has Nintendo succeeded in making the best console simulation of a winter sport, it has also defeated the arcade competition, blasting past Alpine Surfer with ease.

A split screen, two player mode is a valuable and engrossing addition, but unusually, the one player game is even more fun, since there are a ton more options. You can race a computer opponent, practice stunts (and this game is all about stunts), take a turn on

803

In 'License' mode, the slightest error will have you disqualified.

the half pipe, or simply enjoy the beautiful environment.

The game was designed by some of the Wave Race team, and their input is obvious in the smooth learning curve and tight controls. This game shows off the

continued on page 100

System: Nintendo

stuff looks so real.

Price: 569.99

Genre: Racing

Players: | or 2 ESRB rating: E (Everyone)

Recommended: Rumble Pak

Web: www.nintendo.com

How often do you see snow that looks

like it's made out of real water? This

Publisher: Nintendo

Developer: Nintendo

Character builds feature real 'skin' which stretches realistically as characters bend and pose.



Stunts are important to progress through the game. Some moves have to be done to reach score targets.



SECOND **OPINION**

Apparently this reviewer has been hanging out with the Canadian snowboard team and the contact high has him praising the wrong elements of this game. However, it is true that 1080 is a must-have title and that the gameplay, graphics, and sound set new standards in

the industry. However, the most fun to be had in 1080 is in the two-player races. You just can't beat head-to-head competition and whacking a buddy with the bottom of your board as you zip past to the finish line.

The only complaint about 1080 is that there isn't a four-player, head-to-head race. That would have made the game even better.

-IGN64.com

This game differs massively from the regular Nintendo style. Instead of cutesy-cutesy, this leans more towards true simulation - thanks largely to the unusual make up of the programming team - led by a British designer. Handling is as realistic as can be expected - an effect enhanced by the analog control. SNOWBOLARDING









continued from page 98

N64 controller and more impressively, the N64 rumble pack. Coasting through powder, skating on ice, rumbling across packed powder - it all feels completely natural and realistic.

1080 features six different characters (five guys, one girl) from Japan, the United States, Canada, and Great Britain. Each character differs substantially in speed, balance, technique, power, and ability to jump. There are even some tricks exclusive to certain characters. You can also select from normal or goofy stances. The game's feeling and control is currently unmatched in the marketplace. Not only does the Rumble Pak give you the appropriate feedback when boarding over different surfaces, your board's interaction with the surface and its varying responsiveness make 1080

feel like the real thing. And if the normal view isn't fast enough for you, switch to

a first-person perspective and be dazzled and dizzied by the break-neck speed.

Don't take in the scenery too much, though. Each time you fall, your damage meter goes up. If your board is too damaged, you will be forced

to 'retire'.

As you can see from the screen-shots covering this page, 1080's graphics are simply gorgeous and show what's possible in the second generation of N64 games. The overall look is more in line with Boss Game's Top Gear Rally, with realistic environments, but little track detail. You will find sun-drenched tracks with trees and fallen logs, working Jumbotron TVs, cottages, frozen rivers (with reflections), and some of the coolest snow textures yet. While a lack of track detail could've made the environ**CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON WISELY**

Selecting from an actual line of snowboards adds to the realism of the game. The handling and durability are important choices if you plan on winning. These are real boards, from Lamar's 1999 range.

> Character choice is of paramount importance. It's not simply a case of picking someone by nationality or appearance, you really have to learn their strengths and weaknesses to progress through the ranks. Pick wisely or eat snow - the

> > ers

man-

aged

to fix

this as

example, both

well. For

your board

and your

hands leave

trails in the

snow,

lent snow spray effects, and the

and lens flare effects are the

best yet.

shadow, lighting (torches at night!),

On the downside, there's a tiny

bit of slowdown, polygon tearing,

and pop-up once in a while, but

1080's overall presentation. Good

news for multiplayer afficionados:

The two-player mode is plenty fast

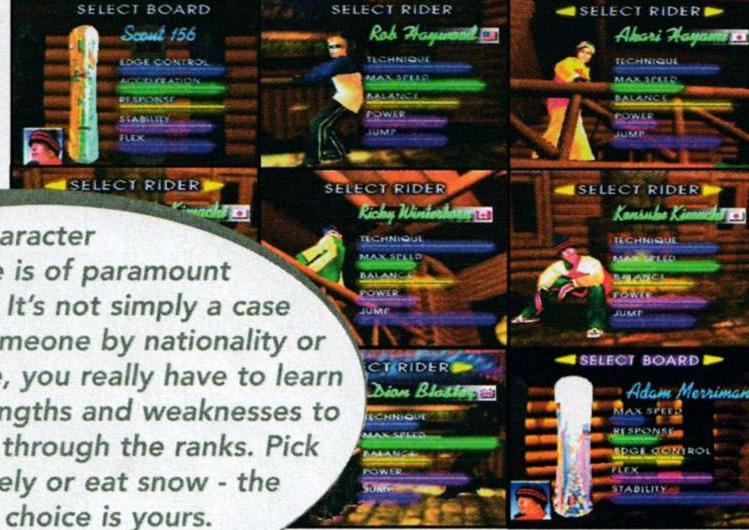
and just another way to extract

enjoyment out of this game.

not enough to put a dent into

accompa-

nied by excel-



ments sterile, the develop-

Replays show the action from a third person perspective - often more dramatic than the in-game view.

The music — surround sound thrash, techno and hip-hop impresses with fast drum beats and more voice effects than any other cart game so far. The sound effects are completely realistic and make the game come to life.

So what are you waiting for?



This replay shot shows off the fact that the board isn't simply glued to the course, reacting in a convincing way.



EQUALIZER

EXCELLENT GOOD AVERAGE LACKING GENTERY **GRAPHICS SOUND** CONTROL GAMEPLAY DEPTH

REVIEWS

Ride the Penguin

In WaveRace, there was the elusive dolphin. Now, by popular demand, the developers have included a similar secret in 1080. The Penguin board can be acquired by pulling off a 1080 and a reverse 1080. Sounds easy enough, that is, until you try pulling off a dual 1080. The nearly impossible to pull-off trick is rewarded with a live Penguin under the snowboarder's feet.

SPLIT PERSONALITY

It's a racing game in essence, so it's important that 1080 features a well designed two player mode.



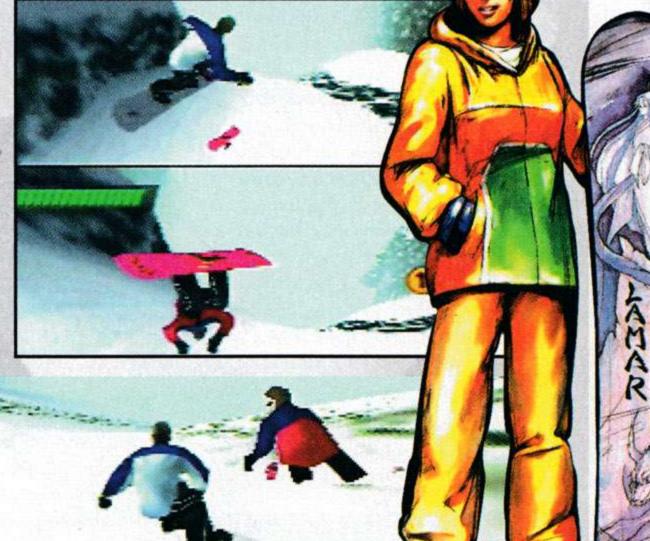


There's very little loss of frame rate with the split-screen mode activated and the cutdown view works well.





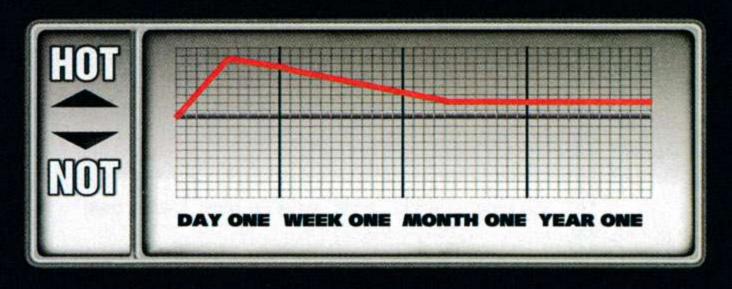
Nothing funnier than seeing your opponent taking a nasty fall and knowing you're about to take the lead.
Ho-ho-ho!





If both players choose the same character, a simple costume change helps alleviate any possible confusion.

PREDICTED INTEREST GRAPH



A chat with the team behind 1080 reveals just how the game got to be so damn good! Although developed at the Japanese headquarters of Nintendo Corporate Limited (NCL) in Kyoto, at the center of the 1080 Snowboarding team is actually a pair of English programmers, Giles Goddard and Colin Reed. We caught up with Giles Goddard to find out more about the next great N64 game.

宣儒 锁条门时代表

GB: Who's on the team?

It's a mish-mash really. There are two programmers, myself and Colin
Reed, and we both
worked on Wild Trax for
Argonaut. I also worked
on StarFox. We have a
designer who worked on
the WaveRace project and
our director is from Namco,
where he worked on
Tekken 2. Shigeru
Miyamoto is
the producer.

GB: Everyone's very impressed with the way it looks. Can you tell us a little about what's going on under the hood?

NCL: The 3D engine is, of course, the original N64 engine, but then we're doing various tricks. For example, the characters are 'skinned', so there are no joints between the polygons. Also, all the character animations are interpolations between animation and inverse kinematics. So basically, when your character hits something in the game, his body is modified according to what you hit, from what direction, and at what speed.

GB: To what extent is it an accurate snowboarding simulation? Are the tricks in the game based on real snowboarding tricks, and to what extent is the interaction between the snowboard and the course terrain based on real-world physics?

NCL: For the board dynamics, we basically modeled a real board with all the edge friction and underside friction and so on. So, yes, the game does all of the applications to replicate the real physics of a real board. So when you're skating down in the game and, say, catch the edge of your board down a tree trunk, the game handles all of the calculations in real time. It's not using any hardwired solutions or anything like that.

GB: To what extent have you sacrificed simulation accuracy for arcade thrills and gameplay?

NCL: Only a little. It definitely comes down on the simulation side of the fence. But having said that, there are certainly a lot of little fudges in there that make it more of an enjoyable arcade-style experience.

GB: What do you make of the other snowboarding games in for the N64?

NCL: Um, I can't really talk about this. Let's just say that we haven't seen too much competition.
We're not sweating.

GB: Do you guys actually snowboard yourself?

NCL: I'm a snowboarder, and a couple of the artists are snowboarders, and what we're most enthusiastic about is the 'feel' of the game.

#原尼风图《

In the future, the world lies in ruins. Powerful corporations at war rely on Bio F.R.E.A.K.S. (or Biological Flying Robotic Enhanced Armored Killing Synthoids) to settle territorial Midway's visually disputes. Fights

between synthoids are to the bloody delivers plenty of blood and death. Welcome carnage, but a stale fighting to Midway's latest fighter. Originally developed as an arcade title and then

Saffire, Bio F.R.E.A.K.S. features more than ten unique fighters and 11 interactive arenas. Unlike Midway's last fighter, War Gods, the character design in Bio F.R.E.A.K.S. is exceptional,

ported to Nintendo 64 by





Blood continues to pour out after a fighter's arm has been amputated.

utilizing soft-skin textures for more realistic movements. Combining sadistic themes and gore factor, Midway has come up with such nasty fighters as Zipperhead, a drooling maniac with unnatural spikes ripping out of his body and Purge, a scissorwielding psychopath.

The game has plenty of excessive blood and gore too. Players can decapitate, amputate

Bio F.R.E.A.K.S. features more than ten fighters (including two hidden ones).



One of the game's more unique features in the game is the ability to hover in the air during fights.

System: Nintendo 64

Price: \$54.99 Genre: Fighter Players: I or 2

Character design is superb, though the game is a bit gory and sadistic.

ESRB rating: M (Mature) Recommended: Rumble Pak

Publisher: Midwau Developer: Saffire Web: www.midway.com

or simply cut enemies in half. Worse, if a fighter loses an arm, they will keep fighting as blood gushes from the wound.

What keeps Bio F.R.E.A.K.S. from a higher score is its stale, trademark Midway fighting system, which is more a nuisance than a joy. Bio F.R.E.A.K.S. is just War Gods with a pretty facelift.



INFLUENCES

stunning, futuristic fighter

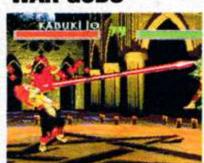
becoming a classic.

engine keeps it from

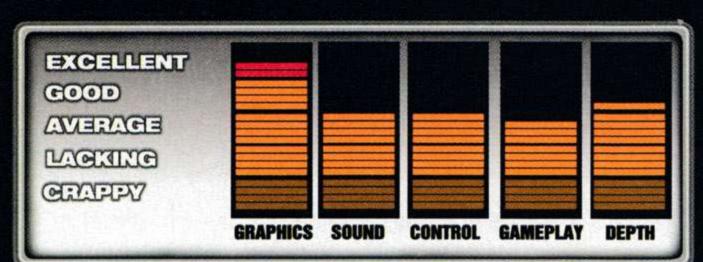
MORTAL KOMBAT, **WAR GODS PUBLISHER: Midway**

It's no secret that Bio F.R.E.A.K.S. has been influenced (at the very least) by the previous Midway incarnations of Mortal Kombat and, more recently, War Gods. Midway's fighting formula, one that relies more so on projectiles and gruesome effects than it does upclose battle technique, has grown exceedingly stale over the years. On the other hand, updates to classic fighters such as Street **Fighter and Tekken** have withstood the test of time.

WAR GODS



EQUALIZER



PREDICTED INTEREST GRAPH



REVIEW >

Chopper that

ADEA MAD DATA

Targets Radar

Engmy 35

Midway Home
Entertainment brings Seta's
Wild Choppers to the U.S. with a
new name and a few adjustments, but the same old
graphics and gameplay.

Air Force strength

The map screen at the beginning of the missions gives away the locations of enemy installations.

DOUBLE TAKE

GAME: Wild Choppers PUBLISHER: Seta SYSTEM: N64 (Japan)

Chopper Attack will be instantly familiar to Import gamers who picked up Wild Choppers last year - it's the same game. After its Japanese release, Seta shopped the game around with a number of publishers before Midway finally picked It up for US release. Thankfully, Midway went the extra mile and fixed some of the control problems of the original and added options to switch off the mediocre music at will.

Essentially a fully polygonal version of Jungle Strike for the

Super NES, Chopper Attack has a lot to be excited about: 3D graphics, a mostly fluid frame-rate, booming explosions, missions with different objectives, power-ups, eight attack choppers, and an arsenal of missiles, bombs and decoys. Unfortunately, there are just as many problems.

The biggest downfall of the game is its often painfully slow pace, even with the fastest helicopter. Players also have no control over their chopper's altitude and are stuck close to the ground - not a good premise, considering the low resolution of the textures and the amount of fogging necessary to hide pop-up. Although Midway managed to improve the controls over its Japanese incarnation, Chopper Attack still lacks precision, making it incredibly hard for novice

players to acquire targets.

In spite of these problems and the notable lack of a multi-player mode, Chopper Attack has its moments. Blowing up buildings and little screaming Rambos is fun, and offers adequate, if not compelling, entertainment value.



Although the variety of choppers manages to add some replay value to the title, the lack of multi-player battles is unforgivable.

System: Nintendo 64

Price: \$59.99

Genre: Action

Players: |

ESRB rating: T (Teen)

Recommended: Rumble Pak

Publisher: Midway

Developer: Seta

Web: www.midway.com



We have been informed that an aircraft carrying POW's is now approaching the enemy airport.

Unfortunately, most of the front end graphics are very poor and the mission briefings are badly written.



The gameplay is more enjoyable than the lackluster graphics.



EQUALIZER

EXCELLENT GOOD AVERAGE LACKING GRAPPY GRAPHICS SOUND CONTROL GAMEPLAY DEPTH

PREDICTED INTEREST GRAPH



Of all the sports that have become videogames, basketball seems to be the most difficult to turn into a convincing and satisfying facsimile of

Sports games have never been the strong suit of Nintendo consoles, but NBA Courtside promises better days for sports on the N64.

the real thing. The usual B-ball videogame is filled with a number of Basketball elements, but often lacks the highspeed action and game nuances that

Kobe Bryant in NBA Courtside offers all the Cameras can be adjusted for close ups, but modes and features that not all angles are feasible for play. sports gamers have come to expect. Players can elect to play a single game, a partial or full season, or the playoffs.

distinguish the sport.

Every conceivable game feature seems to have option settings for it so the game can be customized to every whim. But what truly makes NBA Courtside surprising is the computer AI.

There are moments in the game when the computer simply does things you don't expect of a non-human oppo-

Highlight reel-like cut scenes occasionally interrupt gameplay, but they're short and sweet rather than annoying and repetitive.



nent (i.e. a wrap around bounce pass to a back door cutter).

The game won't disappoint with its graphics and player animations. A traditional B-ball videogame problem of spotty collision detection heads up the list of the game's flaws.

NBA Courtside offers satisfying entertainment in both single and multiplayer modes.

公会会会会

NBA Courtside offers a selection of eight easily accessible offensive plays, but plays for the defense are mysteriously absent.

be unpredictable and intricate in executing plays. Definitely one of the game's high points.

The computer Al in NBA Courtside can

HEAD TO HEAD

NBA IN THE ZONE 64 PUBLISHER: Konami SYSTEM: N64

The In The Zone series has always been among the top basketball game contenders on the PlayStation, but the N64 version of the game doesn't live up to the standard set by its PlayStation cousins. **Detailed stats and** smooth player animations are the game's strong points that are overshadowed by the blurry graphics and imprecise control.

NBA IN THE ZONE

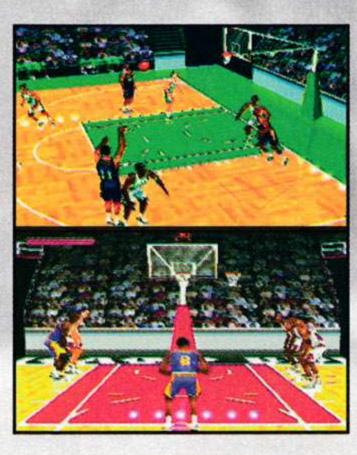


System: Nintendo 64

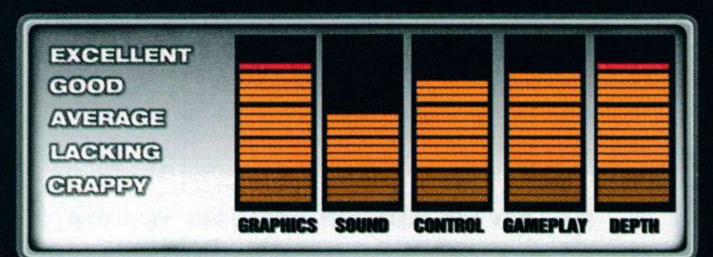
Price: \$54.99 Genre: Sports Players: I to 4

ESRB rating: € (€veryone) Recommended: Controller pack

Publisher: Nintendo Developer: Left Field Web: www.nintendo.com



EQUALIZER



PREDICTED INTEREST GRAPH



WALK SOFTLY & CARRY A BIG MAGIC STICK.



Major League Baseball Featuring

The Nintendo 64 possesses the capability to display striking graphics and, on the whole, Ken Griffey Jr. Baseball delivers with visuals that look amazingly life-like.

Everything from the

The sports hungry N64 gets some sustenance with Major League Baseball Featuring Ken Griffey Jr., but the game is long on looks and short on gameplay sophistication.

ballparks to the players are recreated to a satisfying level of detail, though the graphics do have a slightly blurred appearance that seems to be a signature of N64 games.

Ken Griffey Jr. Baseball trots out the standard line up of Exhibition, Season, World Series, and Home Run Derby modes. The ability to make trades and acquire free agents adds some nice elements in Season mode. Since the game possesses both the League and the Players' licenses - all the teams, ballparks, and the majority of players are available for play.

Younger gamers and gaming novices will find this a basic, but enjoyable, experience in an attractive package. However, the majority of sports enthusiasts will find that the game fails to translate the nuances that make Baseball so enjoyable. Things like limited pitch selection, limited

A variety of camera angles enhance the visuals, but add little to gameplay as control is momentarily suspended during

sequences.

defensive options, and an overly simplistic batter/pitcher interface don't seem like enough. Taken as whole, the result is a game that looks like baseball, vaguely plays like baseball, but doesn't feel like baseball.

ABOUT IT! ★★★☆☆

The inability to switch between fielders is one of the game's more serious and annoying flaws.

price: \$59.95

genre: Sports players: I to 2

ESRB rating: E (Everyone) recommended: Controller Pak

The interface in Ken Griffey Jr.

but the control lacks precision.

Baseball is simplistic and functional,

publisher: Nintendo developer: Angel Studios website: www.nintendo.com





Casual gamers will enjoy Ken Griffey Jr. Baseball's no frills gameplay, but hardcore fans will bemoan the lack of control options.

BASEBALL

FLASHBACK

PUBLISHER: Nintendo

As the processing power

systems has grown from

the 8-bit NES to the 64-

bit N64, the name length

Baseball for the NES may

of its baseball games seems to have grown

exponentially as well.

grandiose a name as

Major League Baseball

Featuring Ken Griffey Jr.,

but the straight forward

gameplay was addictive

and revolutionary.

not have had as

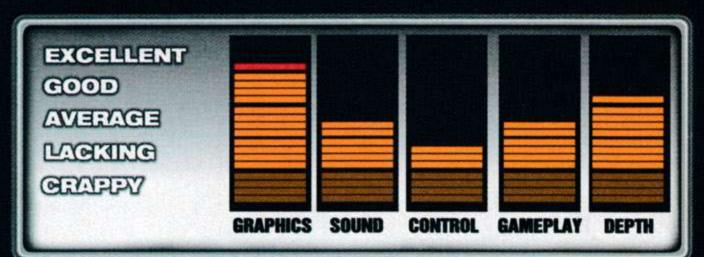
of Nintendo's console

GAME: Baseball

SYSTEM: NES



EQUALIZER



PREDICTED INTEREST GRAPH



All Star Baseball is one of the rare N64 sports titles that earns serious consideration when compared to the best sports games on rival

many N64 games, the graphics in All Star Baseball are a revelation. Everything from the elaborately detailed stadiums to the superbly motion captured players are rendered in high resolution, which results in the most realistic baseball game on any system. Everything looks so

pretty that it's actually

Compared to the blurry anti-

aliased graphics that grace

home systems. a joy to run a computer vs. computer simulation and watch the game like a TV broadcast. The only real flaw in the visual presentation is the abrupt nature of the transition between catching and 0.1

ASB is one of the few games where the Low camera angle doesn't inhibit gameplay too badly. Still, most people will opt for the Medium view.

throwing by the fielders. The sound in the game is also quite good (despite some generic music) with relatively accurate commentary backed by authentic game and crowd noise.

In the all important gameplay arena, All Star is by far the best baseball game for the N64, though still not quite good enough to eclipse the spectacular World Series Baseball '98 for Saturn. Nothing revolutionary has been added to the pitcher/batter interface, but every-



Each Major League stadium is recreated to stunning detail, serving as beautiful back drops for the hardball action.

System: Nintendo 64

Price: \$59.95

Genre: Sports Players: 1 to 4

ESRB rating: € (Everyone)

Recommended: Controller Pak

Publisher: Acclaim Developer: Iguana

Web: www.acclaimnation.com

thing works adequately. The yellow buttons on the N64 controller are perfect for selecting which base you want to throw the ball to. More importantly, the play mechanics and physics models are very well tuned, so unrealistic plays rarely occur. In addition, just about every conceivable option, from drafts, to season simulations, to an extensive stat engine, has been included.

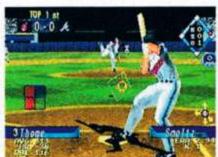
Overall, the gameplay in ASB is well done, but it is the game's graphics that elevate the game above its N64 competition.



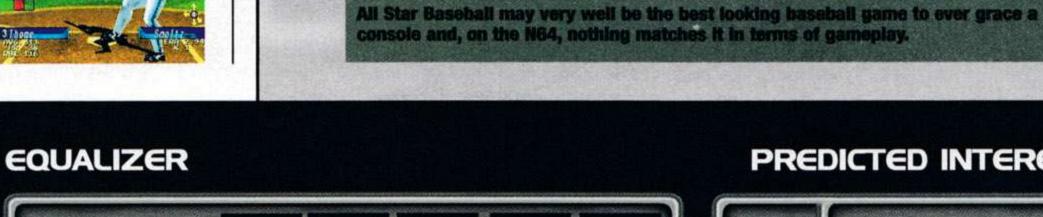
BEST OF BREED

WSB '98 **PUBLISHER: Sega SYSTEM: Saturn**

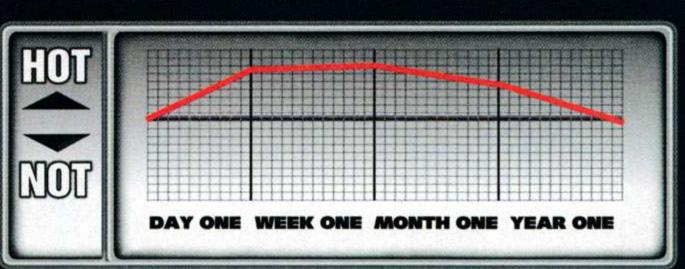
When it comes to baseball videogames, World Series Baseball '98 still rules supreme. WSB '98 earns high marks for its near perfect gameplay and control. An innovative pitcher/batter interface brings a high level of realism to the game. The game's only weakness may be its simplistic stat engine, but hopefully that will be addressed if WSB releases on the Katana.

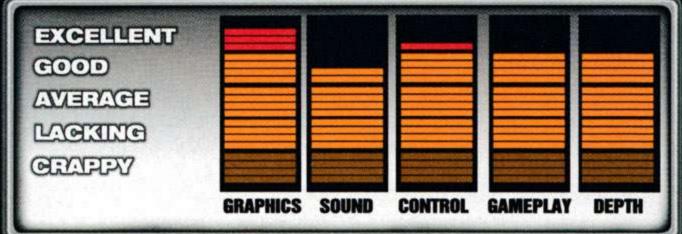


WORLD SERIES BASEBALL '98 ****



PREDICTED INTEREST GRAPH





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GAME BOY









www.majorleaguebaseball.com





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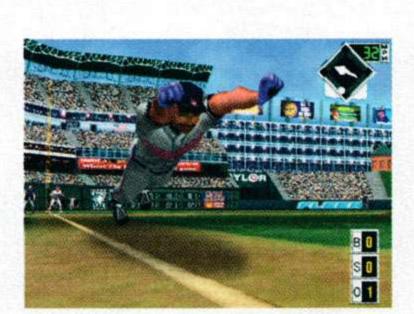
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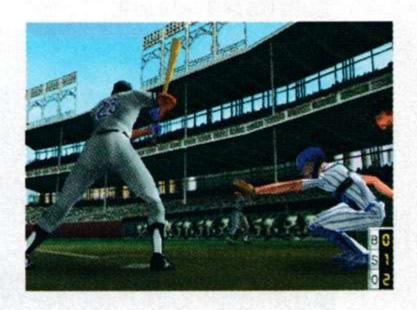
1,000 Play by Play and Color Calls

From the Yankees[™] broadcast team of John Sterling and Michael Kay

Full Rumble Pak Support

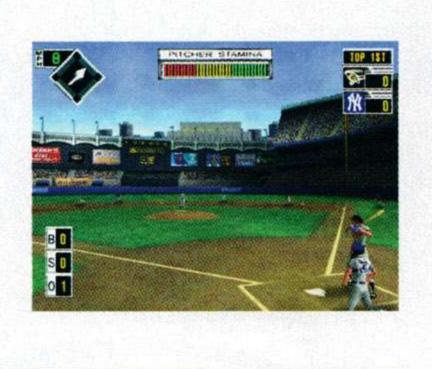
Feel every crack of the bat, home plate collision and line drive grab





ALL-STAR BASEBALL 99

sweat the details



HEAD TO HEAD

Only a handful of games

distinguish the N64 and

ISS certainly has to be

included in this group.

gameplay, great player

control, and a challeng-

minus for the game is the lack of real league

licenses. The N64 ver-

sion of World Cup '98

ISS, but Konami's

INTERNATIONAL

any system.

Remo

compares favorably to

masterpiece remains the

King of soccer games on

SUPERSTAR SOCCER

ing computer Al. The only

ISS offers beautiful

graphics, balanced

INTERNATIONAL

SYSTEM: N64

SUPERSTAR SOCCER

PUBLISHER: Konami

Soccer titles lead the way for sports games on '98 – appearing in time for the marketing hype surrounding the actual World Cup.

The fact of the matter is, despite

way for sports games on the Nintendo 64; World Cup '98 lives up to the example set by ISS and FIFA '98.

The fact of the matter is, despite superficial similarities to FIFA '98, World Cup '98 offers a number of subtle, but

World Cup '98 could be con-

strued as a repackaged FIFA

important, improvements. Graphics have taken an evolutionary step up and WC '98 is the best looking and moving soccer game to ever come out of EA Sports. The jittery effect that was once inherent of player movements in earlier FIFA games has disappeared. The game moves at a faster rate with none of the command/reaction lag that plagued the series.



Sports games are chock full of great, close up camera angles that are utterly useless while playing, and WC '98 is no exception.



The very nature of WC '98's game setup is also quite enjoyable. Players can select to play a single exhibition game or enter the World Cup tournament. All told, there are 32 teams (plus eight hidden bonus teams) and all ten actual World Cup stadiums are faithfully recreated. Once a player manages to win the World Cup, a World Cup Classics mode is available to recreate some of the greatest WC matches of all time.

After what seems like ages, it's no longer a matter of what the game lacks, but rather what the competition does minutely better that keeps EA from regaining the soccer game crown.

Everything from headers to bicycle kicks can be executed in the game, but precise timing is required.

With its wide array of options, practically everyone can set a game of World Cup '98 to precise personal specifications.

World Cup '98 offers an impressive level of detail in its graphics, but

the players move just as good as

System: Nintendo 64
Price: \$59.95

they look.

Genre: Sports
Players: I to 4

ESRB rating: E (Everyone)

Recommended: Controller Pak

Publisher: EA

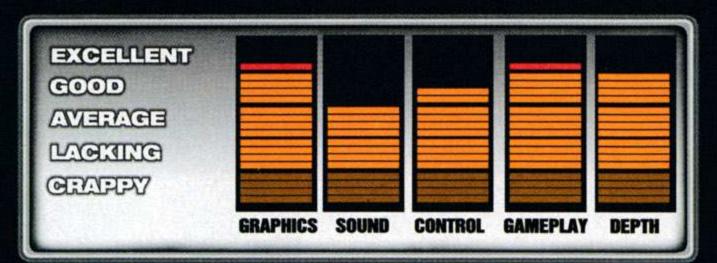
Developer: EA Sports

Web: www.ea.com





EQUALIZER



PREDICTED INTEREST GRAPH



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CRACK UP

It all started when I ventured over to a friends house for the weekend. On the way over we rented a game for his Playstation, Final Fantasy 7. I'll tell you now that I've been Pro-Nintendo for all my life and I continued to brag how great my new N64 was and constantly reminded my friend that his PS was only 32 bit, the CDs were easy to scratch, about loading time, etc. This cutting down proceeded until we popped FF7 in and punched the power. Holy man alive! The demo itself just blew any N64 out of the water! We played (well, actually, I played) until the wee hours of the night. I was hooked. When I got home I tried to be entertained by Mario 64, Mario Kart, and even GoldenEye, until alas, all I could think of was Cloud, Barret, Vincent, and Tifa running about on a quest to save the planet. So you've heard my story. I'm pullin' my hair out over one question. Is the N64 really all it's cracked up to be? Scott Henry Fallon, NV

but it really does do some things very differently from the PlayStation. Although the N64 is faster and generally has sharper graphics, it can't store as many levels or textures as the average PlayStation game. The games market is pretty clearly defined at the moment. Nintendo is

GB: The N64 is a great machine,

PlayStation is clearly ahead. There are more games, and as you have pointed out, it's a far superior

Sony's

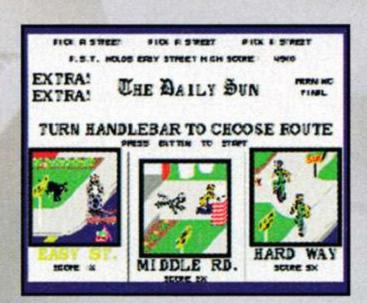
doing well, but

device for storage-intensive games like RPGs. Until Nintendo can ramp up first and third party production, this is an advantage that Sony is always going to have. That said, games like Zelda 64 and Mario 64 will only ever be available on the Nintendo machine and are both worth buying the console for.

EXTRA, EXTRA!

I can't believe this! Let's admit it: we all know that the greatest videogame series ever is Paperboy. Despite this fact, it seems that there hasn't been a Paperboy game for almost seven years! I've heard rumors, like 'The company that made it doesn't exist anymore', or 'Nobody ever liked that game in the first place', but given the great gameplay, tight control and sharp graphics of the other games, I assumed that Nintendo would have been delaying this one from the start! I mean, come on, we're talking about Nintendo, a company who thought that War Gods and Cruisin' USA were good ideas! And anyway, I'm sure that there are at least five other die-hard Paperboy fans out there (three anyway), but if they open up the padded room's doors, I'm sure a Paperboy 64 could do as well as some other Nintendo games, and I would buy it, anyway. Jeremy Sanchez Bethpage, NY

GB: Paperboy is a great old



Is Paperboy old and in the way, or is it just a misunderstood classic?



Zelda 64 and Mario 64 are well worth the price of buying an N64!

game, and is currently available on the PlayStation as part of Midway's Atari Collection disk. There's a good chance that it will never see the light of day on Nintendo, however, and at time of going to press, there were definitely no plans to convert it. Good news for PlayStation owners, however, is that Midway is planning another collection, which is rumored to include Gauntlet II and the immortal skateboard sim, 720.

RENT TO OWN?

I have been a die hard fan of Nintendo ever since I was a little kid. Last year, I got a Nintendo 64, which I bought with my own money. I rarely hear any complaint about the ridiculous prices of the cartridge games. Don't get me wrong, I love the games, but \$70 is just too damn much. How much could it possibly cost to make the simple pieces of ceramic and plastic? \$10-15 at the most!?! Yeah, yeah, I know development costs, but those should be the same as the \$40-50 PlayStation or Saturn games. On another note, way too many kids my age (13-15) get lots of allowance for doing absolutely nothing. What does that mean, you ask? Most kids get all their money from their mommies. Most kids have little or no appreciation for money, so they just blow it all on crappy games that just end up collecting dust. One word for all you people who know how really hard it is to get money: RENT. For a mere four



'Little short for a Stormtrooper, aren't you?'

bucks, you got yourself a game
that you can beat in a couple of
days and then forget about in a
day or so (RPGs, racers and fighters excepted). Buy the great
ones, rent the duds and rent
before you buy. Oh yeah, do you
guys know the release date on
Zelda 64 (THAT GAME WILL
KICK ASS!)?
Matt Skillman
New Paltz, NY

GB: Zelda 64 has been delayed again, along with the 64DD. The game should be released this year, but this is Nintendo we're talking about and further delays are certainly not out of the question. What is certain however is that Zelda will be one of the most involving and playable games on the system. As for the cost of carts? We couldn't agree more. Nintendo does make a hefty profit on each game, and obviously it would be nice if this was slimmed down to accommodate a price reduction. N64 carts are getting cheaper though, and the average cost will be around fifty bucks by the time Christmas rolls around. 64DD was originally intended to reduce game costs, but that addon may never see the light of day in the US. As for renting games, there are plenty that are fun for one or two nights, but represent terrible value as a purchase. Rest assured that Game Buyer will let



The 64DD has been delayed once again, so everyone can start breathing, OK?

you know exactly which ones to buy and which ones to rent.

BREAK 'EM

I would like to set a few things straight. First off, on a larger scale, PCs are considered microcomputers. They are located at the lowest end of the scale and have the least power. They're primitive when compared to the other systems. I could go on, but there's really no reason to. Consoles are dedicated machines and they perform their jobs well. I don't believe PCs will ever replace them. If say, Mortal Kombat 4 were available for the PC, only a fool would buy the more expensive system just to play the game, when you can have it done just as good on your N64. When the time is right, Nintendo will upgrade or release a new system, so give video game machines a break. **Kevin Gloss** Saginaw MI

GB: We agree - consoles are generally better suited to action games, and often games in general, but remember that for your \$1500, you also get a word processor, a modem, a graphics and paint system, a database... need I go on? The fact is that PCs are very, very powerful games systems with a lot more to offer than just games. The cost issue will always be there, but this will only ensure the constant evolution of consoles. Good news for everyone, including PC owners. And have you ever seen Quake 2 running on a Voodoo 2-powered machine? Drool...

DDAZED AND

I read an article on the 64DD and I'm still confused. Does the 64DD come with games or does it just copy games from the N64?
Tad Taylor,
Davis, CA

say this only once. DD (Dynamic Drive) cartridges are magnetic storage carts. You can read games from them just like a CD or a cart. They store less game than a CD and a lot more than a cart. If the 64 DD does come out - it will be released with new games that only come on 64DD as well as add-on levels for existing N64 games. It copies nothing. But you can save game data like passwords and level progression onto the format.

ADULTS ONLY

I read in another magazine that stated 'video games aren't for kids anymore.' You can't believe how mad this made me. I'm eleven years old, with a good variety of Teen and Mature games. I don't play Tomb Raider to see Lara in shorts. I'm a die hard gamer who can beat any game in a few days. Who started this idea that games aren't for kids anymore? Kyle Francis, Alberta, Canada

GB: Sounds like hype to us.

Games are played by a wide range of ages, something Game Buyer takes careful note of.

Some of the easier Nintendo games, like Yoshi's Story, are designed with younger players firmly in mind. It's our intention to bear this fact in mind when reviewing new games.

AT THE MOVIES

I have a few questions. Why is it taking so damn long for Mission Impossible for the N64 to come out? Same question with Tomorrow Never Dies. At the end of Goldeneye 007, they said that Bond would return. Is this just a movie gimmick or is the game in production? Concerned Gamer, Address Unknown

GB: Mission Impossible has undergone a lot of changes since its inception. The game is now following a completely different concept. It has to be said that Ocean has kind of missed the movie hype-train, and so that should ensure careful work to make sure the game is good on its own merits. There will be another Bond game from Rare, but not Tomorrow Never Dies that license is held by MGM. Goldeneye 2 is a more likely prospect given the weird licensing problems with movies and games.

5-STAR LETTER

RUMOR MILL

What's all this I keep hearing about a new Playstation coming out? A Playstation 64? Don't get me wrong, I welcome a new system and all, but come on. Sony is already winning the race of video game consoles. What more do they want — to completely destroy all competition? If these rumors are true, when can I expect a release date? Will they continue to use CDs or resort to cartridges the same as Nintendo? And, how will Sony be able to maintain such a technological standard that we all hope they are capable of for a 64 bit system?

Matt McHan

Citrus Heights, CA

GB: You certainly won't see anything on the new PlayStation until late 1999 and probably not until the year 2000. The video games market has to evolve to survive. this means new games, new ideas and yes, new hardware. Without progress, games would stagnate the way they did in the early eighties. This is a healthy pattern and one that will continue as long as we want to play games. The new machine is expected to be 64 bit, and use high density CDs (or possibly DVDs) for storage - but that's still guesswork at this point. Not to worry though, since the existing PlayStation will be around for years to come.

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MICRON MILLENNIA XKU 333 HOME

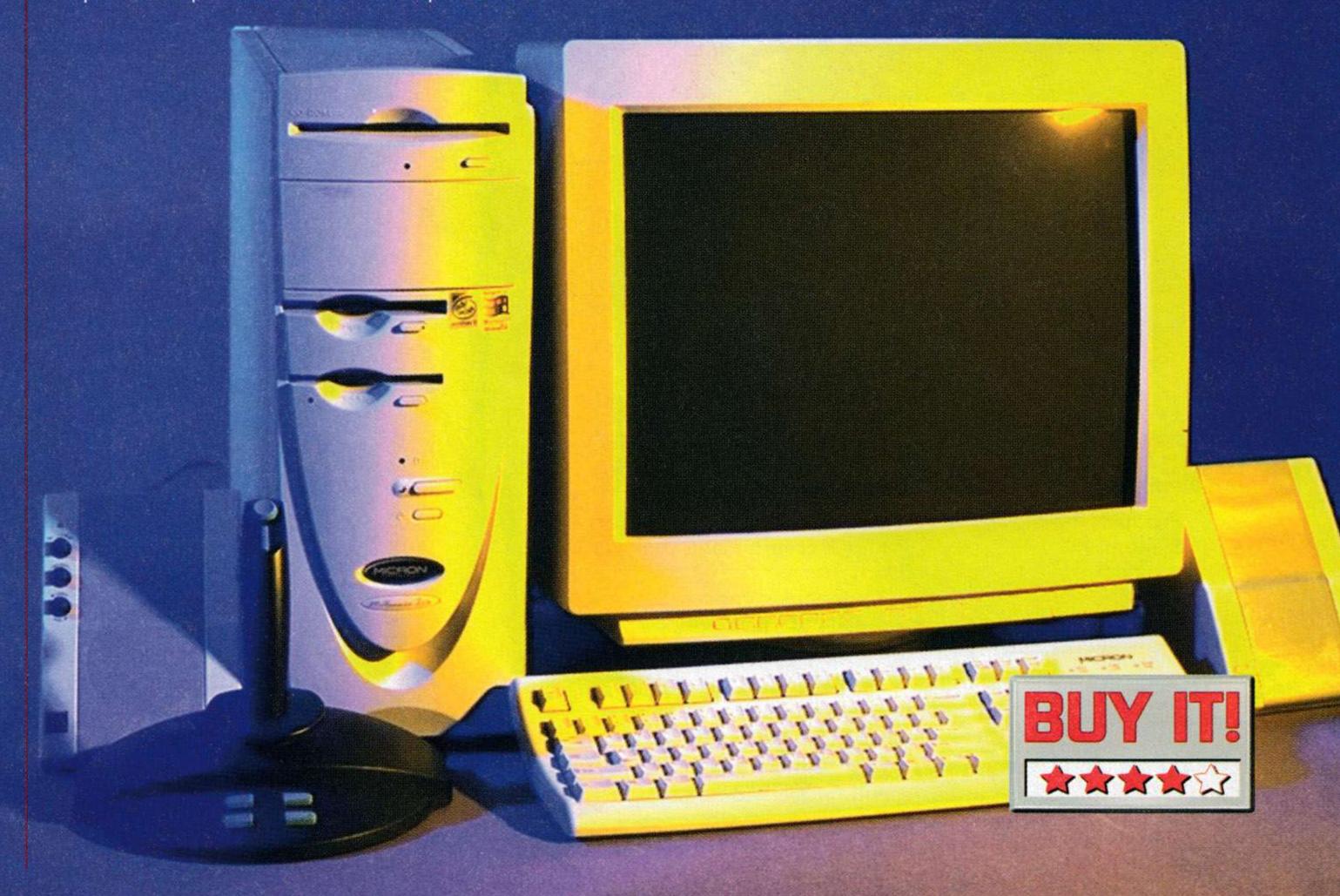
Product: Millenia XKU 333 Home Company: Micron Electronics System: PC Price: \$2792 www.micron.com

Micron knows how to make great gaming machines, and the Millennia XKU 333 Home system should satisfy even the most demanding players with this one stop gaming solution.

The XKU 333 Home features a 333 Mhz Intel Pentium II, 64MB of RAM, a 6.4GB drive, 32x CD-ROM, an outstanding 17 inch monitor, 56k modem, an AWE64 sound card, Advent AV370 powered speakers, a Diamond Viper V330

graphics card for 2D, a Monster 3D card for 3DFX accelerated games and a Microsoft joystick.

The XKU 333 is fast enough to keep you gaming for a long time, has good sound support, solid video cards and a complete collection of gaming accessories. Micron's tech support is also excellent, so it's difficult to go wrong with this machine as the centerpiece of your game room.



HARDWARE

DIAMOND MONSTER 3D II

Product: Monster 3D II Company: Diamond Multimedia System: PC Price: \$249.95 www.diamondmm.com

Diamond has updated its popular Monster 3D card with 3DFX's Voodoo 2 technology. Voodoo 2 works best on faster CPUs like the Pentium II, but any gamer looking for a frame rate speed boost will find it with the Monster 3D II. Though not quite as fast as other Voodoo 2 cards,

BUY IT!

Diamond's low price and rebate program for current Monster 3D owners make it an excellent value.

QUAKE II 640X480 RESOLUTION TIMES

P-133 Software 5.4 FPS

P-133 Voodoo 16.3 FPS

P-133 Monster 3D II 19.4 FPS

P-133 3D Blaster

Voodoo2 20.2 FPS

PII-300 Software 16.8 FPS

PII-300 Voodoo 27.5 FPS

PII-300 Monster 3D II 58.7 FPS

PII-300 3D Blaster

Voodoo2 65.8 FPS

Diamond Monster Sound M80 Audio Accelerator

Diamond's Monster Sound M80 is one of the latest audio accelerators to support Microsoft's
DirectSound, DirectSound 3D, and Aureal A3D positional sound technologies. With this card installed, in games that are Aureal3D or DirectSound 3D compatible, you'll hear the location of sounds all around you. If you can imagine the effect of hearing a helicopter fly in from behind you and to the right, cross to the left-and zoom over your head, then you'll understand what kind of impact on gaming this board can have.

Installation is easy and the board comes with a good game bundle.

You'll still need your old Sound Blaster compatible card for games that don't take advantage of the M80's features though. If you have a two or three speaker setup, the M80 is one of the best audio

oest audio solutions available.

3D BLASTER VOODOO 2

Product: 3D Blaster Voodpo2 Company: Creative Labs
System: PC Price: \$299.95 ww.creativelabs.com



Utilizing the popular Voodoo 2 chipset, the 3D Blaster Voodoo2 looks to be the current king of the hill of 3D acceleration. Unfortunately, older computers won't see much improvement. Those with higher-end

PCs, such as Pentium IIs, can rejoice as your framerates go skyhigh. Quake 2 never looked this good, and neither did any of your current batch of Direct 3D titles. The 3D Blaster Voodoo2 is easily one of the most powerful consumer videocards currently available.



Product: Monster Sound M80

Company: Diamond Multimedia

System: PC Price: \$99.95

www.diamondmm.com

PANTHER XL

Product: Panther XL Company: Mad Catz System: PC Price: \$79.95 www.madcatz.com

The Panther XL is part track ball, part flight stick and works incredibly well during frantic first person death-matching. The stick on the right side of the controller is pretty standard, with two hat switches, three buttons, and a throttle wheel on the base. On the left, five buttons surround a trackball, which really sets the Panther XL apart. There's simply no faster way to turn and target an enemy. Fans of MechWarrior games will be especially pleased with this stick's control. The only problem is the trackball doesn't

have an auto-center for flight sims. If you want to play a first person shooter with a joystick, the Panther XL is the only choice.



GRAVIS XTERMINATOR

Gravis is well known for its outstanding gaming pads, and its new Xterminator is one of its best products yet. Its analog control pad, analog shoulder buttons, and extensive programmability with 59 possible functions make it an excellent control device for even the most demanding games. Add in the eight-way hat switch, additional

digital pad, analog throttle, auto-calibrating, two-player connector, and outstanding software, and the Xterminator becomes one of the top pads available for the PC. The analog control and hat switch are perfect for driving and flying games, and the two player connector makes it a good pad for multiplayer

sports titles. The Xterminator is solidly constructed and a great way to play.

Product: Xterminator Company: Gravis
System: PC Price: \$59.95 www.gravis.com



OBLITERATOR

Product: Obliterator Company: LeVantage Company
System: N64, PlayStation, GameBoy Price: \$4.95 www.oblit.com

Digital pads are out. Analog pads are in. But what to do with all those digital controllers? Make your D-pad feel a bit like analog by using Obliterator add ons. They use dou-

ble sided adhesive tape to stick a solid plastic surface to your controller's directional pad on the left, (are you reading this, fighting game fans?) and the buttons on the right. The tape will wear out, but LeVantage includes extra to cover that contingency.



Memory Card x72

If you're tired of juggling your saved games around a handful of memory cards, Nyko may have a product for you. The Memory Card x72 has 1080 blocks of memory, 72 times the memory of a standard card.

The x72 works by breaking down the 1080 blocks into 15 block pages.
An LED display on the face of the Memory Card x72 displays the current page you're on.

The only problem with the x72 is that it's a little too wide and some people have broken the clips that hold the card in

place. Still, the x72 is very reliable and the amount of memory you get for \$59.95

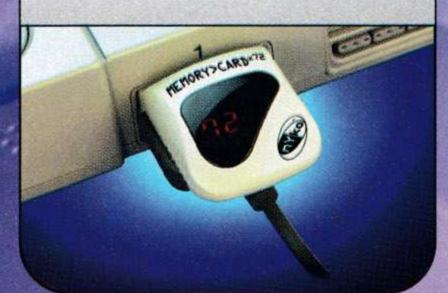


breaks down to just 85 cents per page, an outstanding value.

Product: Memory Card x72

Company: nYko
System: PlayStation

Price: \$59.95 www.nyko.com



SMARTSOCKETS ADAPTER

Product: SmartSockets Adapter Company: Kensington System: Any Price: \$29.99 www.kensington.com

The Kensington SmartSockets Adapter power strip is perhaps the ultimate gaming hardware accessory. The problem with nearly every power strip on the market is that the plugs are too close together and you can't fit more than three or four of those giant AC adapter blocks. The SmartSockets Adapter easily has room for six blocks, plus telephone line protection for your modem, \$10,000 worth of line damage insurance and an L-style flat wall plug. This is without a doubt the best way

to plug in.



!!MAL

Product: Jam!! Company: Aims Lab
System: Console/PC Price: \$79.95 www.aimslab.com

So you have a PC with a huge, gorgeous 19 inch monitor and you play your console games on a puny little 13 inch mono TV. Thanks to Aims Lab's Jam!!, you don't have to any more. The Jam!! is an NTSC to SVGA adapter that allows you to pump your PlayStation or Nintendo 64 video signal to your much higher resolution Mac or PC monitor. The Jam!! uses the S-Video output of your PlayStation (with an included adapter, it uses the composite



video of any console with RCA hookups) to produce sharper, clearer and more saturated images on your PC monitor than you can get out of most mid range TVs. If you're planning to buy a new TV for your console systems, you might want to take a look at the Jam!! as a less expensive alternative.

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INCOMING



All the news, previews and reviews that are fit to print - and then some...

rash Yet Again

In an E3 announcement, SCEA revealed that it'll be going the

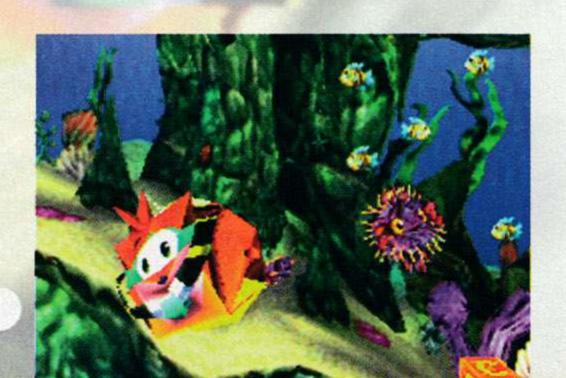
third round again with its token bandicoot, Crash, in a title to be released late this year. Crash 3: WARPED (the name will most likely change in the coming

months) will incorporate even more abilities for the marketable marsupial, including full water levels requiring Crash to swim, as well as the option to play as his sister, Coco. This will be the first game in the series that will allow the player to control any character other than Crash himself, and from these early shots of the game, it's clear

> that Coco will be returning from her first appearance in Crash 2 to cruise one of numerous new global spots like the Great Wall of China.

Other titles announced for the coming year were a boat racing game (Turbo Prop Racing), Hotshots Golf, a cutesy platformer adventure title with a dragon in the lead (Spyro the Dragon), Tomba, the evil pig-slaying platformer hero, as well as quite a few surprise sequels (Twisted Metal 3, Warhawk 2, Rally Cross 2, etc.).

The news about the next Crash title and the string of sequels has also sparked some interesting inquiries among the press about the development arm of SCEA. With Squaresoft taking its titles over to EA for publishing and Final Fantasy VIII looking like it might not make it out before the lifespan of the PlayStation is up, it's going to be an interesting year for Sony. We'll keep you updated on Crash 3 and all of Sony's other surprise titles from E3 in the coming months.

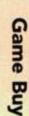


STAR CON

System: Playstation PUBLISHER: Accolade Release Date: Fall '98

Following in the same stead as Colony Wars, but with a lengthy series license behind it (Star Control), Accolade's StarCon mixes high-end graphics with full 3D space shooter action. Highly animated ships can be chosen from three different races of beings in the Alliance, each with their own unique weapons, attributes and technologies. You'll also have the chance to customize and upgrade your ship throughout the game by completing different objectives.

Progression in StarCon is 'event-based' and all encounters will affect the outcome of each mission. The opportunity for multiplayer action, as well as multiple endings and unobtrusive cinemas, make this a title to keep your eye on.





SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION, N64
RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER

Electronic Arts' biggest franchise, the Madden NFL series, is attempting to regain its crown from Sony's Gameday as the best football game on the market. Poised for release on the N64 as well as the PlayStation, player animations have been improved to increase the fluidity of the actual gameplay. They've overhauled the interface for kicking games, as well as refined the AI of the opposing teams to increase the challenge and boost the replay value of the title. Along with the Madden license, EA is also continuing to use actual NFL players' input to help design the actual mechanics and gameplay. EA will also be capitalizing

on the 'superior Al' of the series, which defines the franchise, by using the continued feedback and input of football players and coaches. The biggest difference between this update in the Madden line

from all others is the completely polygonal player models that are reportedly rendered in hi-resolution, but will supposedly not

interfere with the framerate or responsiveness of the controls within the game. Things like players actually following the ball with their eyes (a la Resident Evil 2) should up the immersion and realism. The showdown between the two giants, EA Sports and Sony, will resume later this year when Madden NFL 99 is released. Hopefully, we'll all benefit from the quality of their competition.

Return of the Rebellion

LucasArts is hard at work on the second Star
Wars game for N64 and PC, called Star Wars:
Rogue Squadron. The intense 3D shooter puts
you into the cockpits of W-Wings, A-Wings, YWings, Snowspeeders and the newly designed VWings for graphically impressive dog fights with
the Empire. Battles take place in a variety of Star
Wars environments, including canyons, deserts,
snowscapes, and over treetops.

Rogue Squadron novels and Dark Horse comic book series written by Michael A. Stackpole and Mike Baron. The comic, which debuted in 1995, follows the adventures of Wedge Antilles, arguably one of the most popular supporting characters to appear in all three films in the Star Wars trilogy. In Rogue Squadron for N64, players will be able to play as Rogue 10, a fresh recruit to the 12-member rapid response squadron formed by Luke Skywalker and Wedge Antilles.

LucasArts is aiming for a late '98 release and should make a nice Christmas appearance for N64 owners and PC gamers.



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All the news, previews and reviews that are fit to print - and then some...

J Banks On Crash Yet Again In an E3 announcement, SCEA

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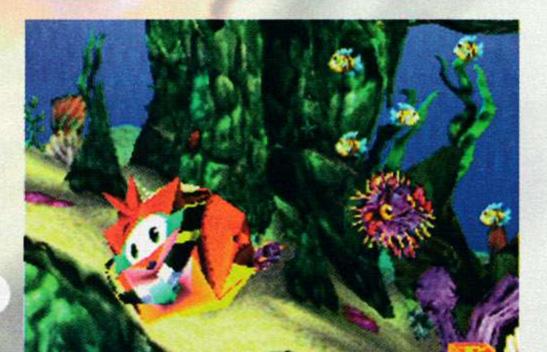
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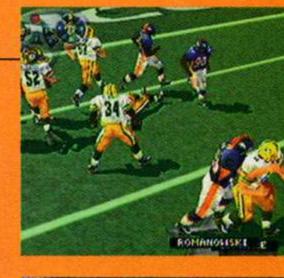
SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION, N64 RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER

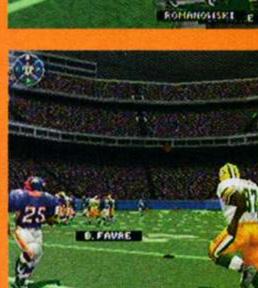
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continued on page 129





Stalks U.S. SYSTEM: Playstation

PUBLISHER: Accolade Release Date: October

> After the jumpstart release of Goldeneye 007 in late '97, 1998 can officially be proclaimed the 'year of the stealth game' with the upcoming release of titles like Metal Gear Solid (PS), Thief (PC), and Mission

Impossible (PS). Activision's offering comes as a surprise acquisition with the announcement of its publishing rights to Sony Music Entertainment Japan's ninja action thriller, Tenchu. Your objective throughout the game is to creep from shadow to shadow, striving to remain undetected while taking out guards and assassins in a feudal Japanese world. A circular meter at the bottom of the screen will track your 'detection' by foes, but you must also try to maintain a high rate of 'honor points.' Honor points are lost when you attack civilians, like innocent women, that wander throughout the game. Enemies must be carefully observed from a safe hiding place, like rooftops, to determine when the right moment to attack may be. If you successfully swoop in for a behindthe-back kill, you'll be able to easily take out the enemy in one swift stroke of your blade. But if you are detected, you'll lose overall points and a longer, tougher fight will ensue. You'll also have to duke it out with skilled bosses as you gain more weapons. Sneaking around corners and hopping from roof

top to roof top are surefire ways to keep in the shadows. Activision has not confirmed what changes are going to be implemented in the US version of the game, but Tenchu should showcase why this is definitely a year for more than just hack and slash action titles and that's a good enough reason to be excited in the coming months.



LucasArts is re-releasing its spacefighter classics X-Wing and TIE Fighter. This is no cosmetic re-release; the games are getting major overhauls, with all the missions and storylines being recast under the newer, Windows 95-based engine used in X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter, a move which will allow for support for 3D accelerator cards.

Expanding its PC development strength, THQ has acquired Massachusetts-based developer GameFX — a start-up focused on developing games that take advantage of the latest PC hardware, particularly 3D acceleration. Its first title — Into the Void — is due in late 98 or early 99.

Accolade has sold its long-running Jack Nicklaus series of golf games to Activision, and apart from its Hardball series of baseball games, Accolade says it is getting out of sports and all other genres except action.

Blizzard has given the go-ahead to Aztech New Media to develop an official add-on pack for Starcraft. No word on a name or release date yet.

San Rafael-based developer, Factor 5 (makers of the Turrican series), is reportedly working on an N64 conversion of Psygnosis' F1 '98. Featuring pit talk and voice effects, Factor 5 will use homemade speech compression techniques.



Konami Invests in N64

Despite mediocre N64 sales in Japan, Konami is expanding its already huge N64 line-up with a number of franchises. Next to an allnew 3D action adventure called Survivor Day 1 and the company's first N64 RPG, Dear Blue, the Japanese publisher is also releasing N64 versions of such NES classics as Castlevania, Bottom of the Ninth and Blades of Steel. Konami's list of sequels also includes International Superstar Soccer.

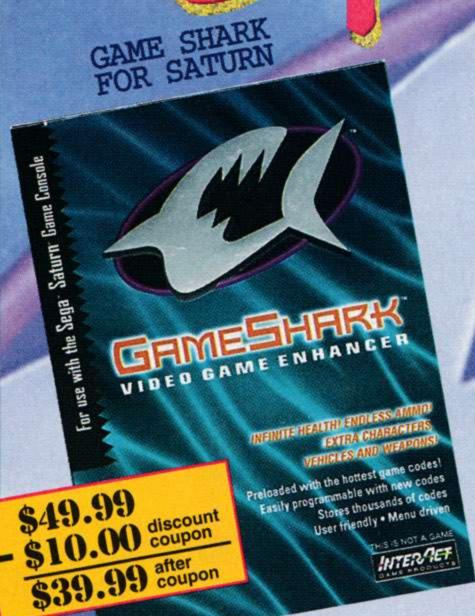
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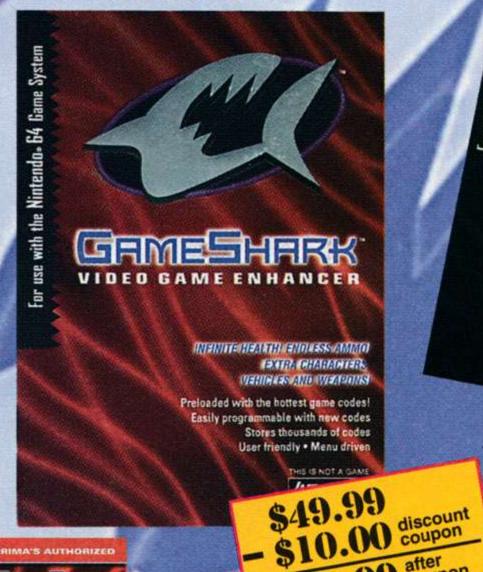
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GAMESHARK ENHANCEMENT DISC

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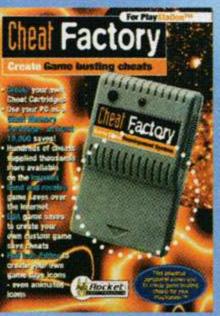
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Crystal Dunamics Shows its stuff

Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver

SYSTEM: PlayStation
Release Date: October

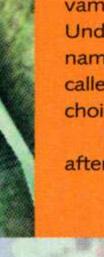
The original Legacy of Kain, when released in 1996, was probably among one of the earliest role-playing type

games to grace the PlayStation. Its subsequent success and the depth of the storyline has spurred Crystal Dynamics to take on the sequel project to one of its most promising franchises. This time around, instead of controlling the vampire, Kain (who has now taken control of the Underworld), you'll be guiding one of his deluded disciples, named Razier, who has been 'adopted' by a dark entity called 'The Elder.' And souls are now the menu items of choice, as opposed to blood, like in the original.

In addition to the gameplay taking place 1000 years after the events in the original title, the look and feel of

LoK: Soul Reaver appears at this early point in development to upstage those of the first in every way, as well. Extremely high-res environments are promised to make up most of the worlds in the game as well as massive areas to explore. The gameplay will still incorporate many RPG-type aspects, but the action now takes place in a completely 3D world (similar to Tomb Raider), avoiding the top-down view of the first game. With the incredibly polished look of early screens and the potential for a very

long involving plot, it appears
that Crystal Dynamics is pouring
its heart and soul into this project, heralding it
as the PlayStation's answer to **Zelda 64**. We'll
have more information about **LoK: Soul Reaver**as it develops.





SYSTEM: PlayStation
Release Date: October

Using a modified version of the gameplay engine originally created for Gex 2, Crystal Dynamics is hard at work modeling a much darker adventure with Akuji the Heartless. The game follows a murdered tribal warrior who must, literally, travel from the depths of hell to wreak vengeance on the men who killed him on his wedding day. Not exactly your lighthearted tale.

Some of the other subtle changes from 'Gex-ian'

gameplay are smarter foes who react more naturally to your character's presence and to their surrounding environments. Akuji, the main character's name, will also be able to wield magic spells to really show off the technological advances in the reworked engine.





INCOMING

The Unholy War

SYSTEM: PlayStation, PC Release Date: October

















SYSTEM: N64 PUBLISHER: Nintendo Release Date: October

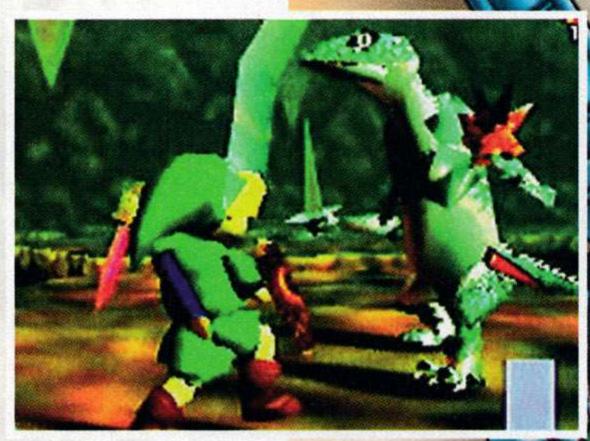
With information regarding the game being carefully leaked to the press, Zelda: OT is slowly shaping up to one of the most anticipated games on any system, even with all of the frequent release snags.

Things like the promise of unparalleled camera controls, as well as mammoth worlds for Link to explore on foot, horseback, and underwater, Nintendo is preparing Zelda to be the answer to lagging Japanese sales.

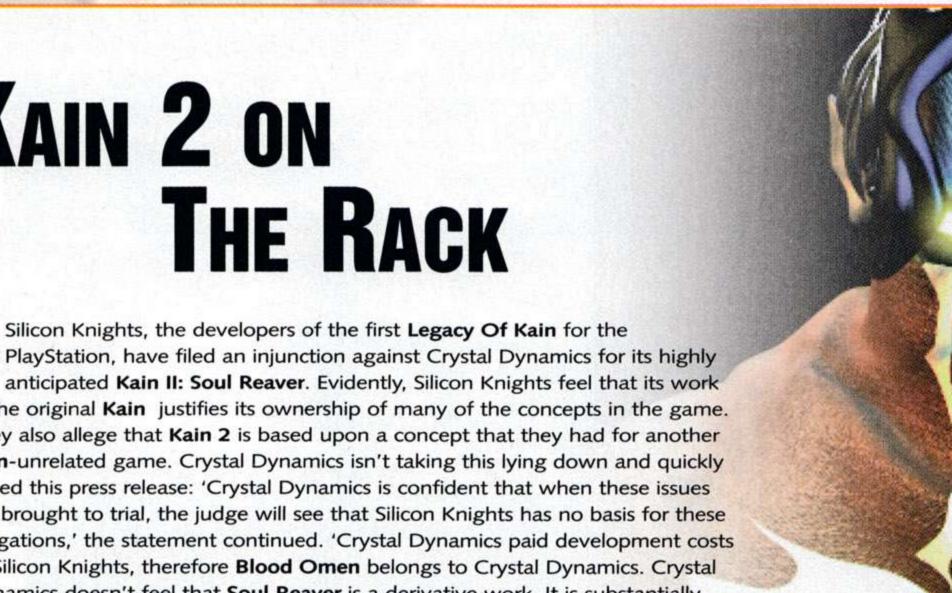
From the playable version of Zelda at the last Tokyo Game Show, a camera system enabling Link to 'lock onto' various enemies and objects appeared to be the most revolutionary feature in the game. A fairy, named Navie, guides Link and gives him helpful information through actual speech within the

> game. She also acts as a visual indicator for when to lock onto the enemy by pressing and holding the Z trigger button. Navie does this by glowing red when the camera is directly facing the enemy. At any other time, she glows a bluish hue.

Once Link zeroes in on a target and the camera successfully locks onto it, you can strafe, dodge or attack while keeping the enemy within sight, avoiding annoying camera glitches. It's an innovative step for Nintendo, and along with the game's namesake, Zelda: OT promises to be one of the more groundbreaking titles of the year. We'll keep you updated on the progress of the game as information is released.









KAIN 2 ON THE RACK

INCOMING

in the original Kain justifies its ownership of many of the concepts in the game. They also allege that Kain 2 is based upon a concept that they had for another Kain-unrelated game. Crystal Dynamics isn't taking this lying down and quickly issued this press release: 'Crystal Dynamics is confident that when these issues are brought to trial, the judge will see that Silicon Knights has no basis for these allegations,' the statement continued. 'Crystal Dynamics paid development costs to Silicon Knights, therefore Blood Omen belongs to Crystal Dynamics. Crystal Dynamics doesn't feel that Soul Reaver is a derivative work. It is substantially different from Legacy of Kain. There are some fictional references to Blood Omen, but the game has a completely new look and feel.' Check out game coverage on Kain 2 in our preview of Crystal Dynamics' E3 lineup.

Silicon Knights, the developers of the first Legacy Of Kain for the





continued From page 121

Porta- Review

Warner Bros.' animated feature, Quest for Camelot, is getting its own game on the Game Boy. Your objective is to make your way through the game, collecting eight pieces of a parchment which will then reveal how to defeat the boss at the end. Spanning forty levels over eight worlds, you must collect items and solve puzzles while battling it out in an action/RPG setting. It's a pure Zeldastyle adventure, so what more could you ask for? A good choice for Game Boy owners.



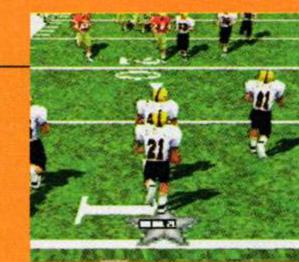
Create-A-Shooter?

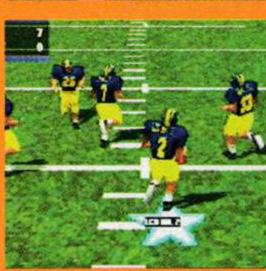
Athena's Dezaemon, a unique 3D shooting construction kit, is coming to the US. According to the Japanese company, a number of US publishers have shown interest in bringing the game stateside, including Take 2 Interactive and Crave Entertainment.

NCAA Football '99

SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION RELEASE DATE: JULY/SEPT

The latest offering in the EA college football lineup, NCAA Football 99's newest additions to gameplay include the title as the only NCAA game with exclusive rights to the Fed-Ex Orange, Tostitos Fiesta and Nokia Sugar Bowls, as well as official rights to the Heisman Trophy license. This release will be for the PlayStation only. Contrary to the belief that Sony's inhouse sports development team has EA licked, EA showed remarkable profits for the whole of 1998, making them clearly the stronger presence in the field.





NBA Live '99

SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION, PC RELEASE DATE: FALL 98

One of the most popular series of basketball titles around, the NBA Live line is being spruced up with a brand spanking new game engine that supports what EA is calling the 'Read and React' artificial intelligence. Opponent Al has become the one feature in games that has been receiving the most attention, programming-wise, and EA isn't about to let its sports titles miss out on the trend. There's not much information available about the title as of yet, since NBA Live '98 is still going strong in sales and presence on the videogame forefront. We'll give you the scoop as soon as screens and more info becomes available on the game.

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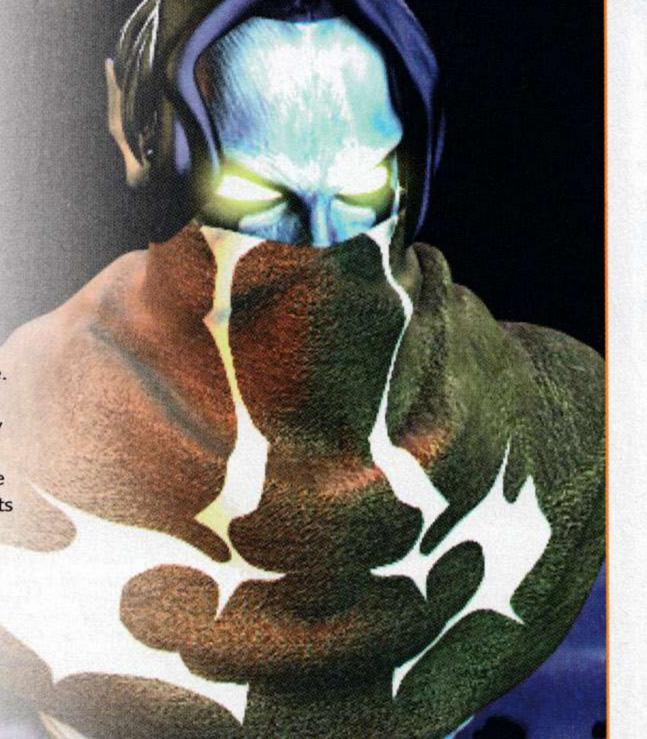


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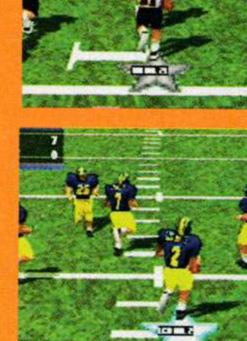
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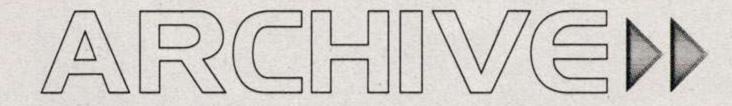
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INCOMING





www.ebworld.com



Why guess whether a game is good or bad? Why take a chance that your hard earned cash is garnering only ho-hum thrills at the game rental store? Game Buyer takes all the risks out of buying or renting games. We now present our exclusive, conclusive Archive section, which will contain more than 400 games in the premiere issue.

NINTENDO 64

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	RELEASE	COMMENTS	
Aerofighters Assault	McO'River	01/98	Good looking arcade-type flight sim with Sci-Fi elements.	
Aerogauge	ASCII Ent.	04/98	Tired of waiting for F Zero X? Take Aerogauge for a spin.	*
Automobili Lamborgini	Titus	01/98	A Lamborgini racer that is sound, but uninspiring.	
Blast Corps	Nintendo	05/97	Nintendo finally satisfies your appetite for destruction.	*
Bomberman 64	Nintendo	12/97	HudsonSoft classic gets the 64-bit treatment.	,
Clay Fighter 63 1/3	Interplay	11/97	Ho-hum fighter with clay figures. Yawn.	
Cruisin' USA	Nintendo	01/97	This game is an accident waiting to happen.	
Dark Rift	Vic Tokai	06/97	It looks great, but a not so refreshing fighting experience.	,
Diddy Kong Racing	Nintendo	12/97	Rare does Mario Kart one better with planes and cars.	*
Doom 64	Midway	04/97	Evil comes to the N64 — and it's really cool!	,
Duke Nukem 64	GT Interactive	11/97	The Duke puts in an appearance on Nintendo's console.	
Extreme G	Acclaim	12/97	Futuristic weapon-filled racer.	,
F1 Pole Position	Ubi Soft	10/97	The first (and only) Formula 1 style game on the N64.	,
FIFA 64	Electronic Arts	06/97	Not the best team on the pitch.	
FIFA 98	EA Sports	02/98	Once again, the best soccer game available.	,
FIFA: Road to the World Cup 64	Electronic Arts	01/98	EA does FIFA right this time.	,
Fighter's Destiny	Ocean	03/98	Unique fighter with lots of depth.	
Goldeneye 007	Nintendo	10/97	007 action in one of the best console first person shooters ever.	*
Gretzky 64	Williams	02/97	Mediocre hockey for your Nintendo.	
Hexen	СП	07/97	Hexen rears its ugly head on the Nintendo 64.	
International Superstar Soccer	Konami	07/97	The best soccer game. Period.	*
Jeopardy	Gametek	03/98	Alex Trebek on your N64.	
Killer Instinct Gold	Nintendo	01/97	If you're a fan of Killer Instinct, you won't be disappointed, others beware.	
Mace: The Dark Age	Midway	11/97	Goth fighter with plenty of gore.	
Madden 64	Electronic Arts	12/97	Madden 64 is the same exact game as Madden '98, without the NFL license.	
Mario Kart 64	Nintendo	03/97	Cutesy racer featuring Nintendo mascot.	
Mischief Makers	Nintendo	12/97	One of those odd titles that tends to create a small dedicated audience among gamers.	
Mortal Kombat Trilogy	Williams	12/96	The first fighter on the N64 is nothing new.	
Multi Racing Championship	Ocean	11/97	Multi Racing Championship is a fast blast racer.	
Mystical Ninja	Konami	04/98	Evil opera stars abound in wacky Mario-esqe action RPG.	
Nagano Winter Olympics	Konami	03/98	Exciting winter sports made boring.	
NBA In The Zone 64	Konami	03/98	The game that just keeps trying and not doing so well.	
Pilot Wings 64	Nintendo	10/96	The N64's hang-gliding, rocket-pack, and gyro-copter flying game.	*
Quake 64	Midway	03/98	Quake gets the Nintendo treatment, and boy, it looks pretty.	
Quarterback Club 64	Acclaim	12/97	One of the best football games for the N64.	,
Rampage World Tour	Midway	03/98	Rampage resurrected for the N64	
Robotron 64	Crave	02/98	Psychedelic shooting fun gets the 64-bit treatment.	
San Francisco Rush	Midway	12/97	Big air racing through the streets of San Francisco.	*
Shadows of the Empire	Nintendo	01/97	The Empire doesn't strike out, but Nintendo reveals a dark side.	
Snowboard Kids	Atlus	04/98	Snowboarding game with cute kiddy riders.	,
Starfox64	Nintendo	07/97	Fox McCloud is back, and ready to rumble!	
Super Mario 64	Nintendo	10/96	Is Mario alone worth the price of a new system? You betcha!	*
Tetrisphere	Nintendo	10/97	Tetris gets the spheroid treatment.	,
Top Gear Rally	Midway	11/97	Rally sim for the diehard racer in you.	,
Turok: Dinosaur Hunter	Acclaim	04/97	The first anti-aliased bloodbath ever.	,

PC

GAME NAME P	PUBLISHER	RELEASE	COMMENTS	
Arcades Greatest Hits 2	Midway	02/98	Moon Patrol, Burgertime, Root Beer Tapper, Spy Hunter and Blaster.	**
Armored Fist 2: M1A2 Abrams	NovaLogic	12/97	An M1A2 Abrams tank shooter with sim aspects.	**
Atomic Bomberman	Interplay	09/97	The little bombers come to the PC.	**
Blade Runner	Virgin	02/98	The classic movie becomes a classic graphic adventure.	***
C & C Red Alert	Virgin	12/96	Command and Conquer, but better.	**
C & C Red Alert, Counterstrike	Virgin	06/97	Red Alert's first official add-on expansion.	**
Carmageddon	Interplay	08/97	It's Deathrace 2000 on the PC with gore galore!	***
Cart Precision Racing	Microsoft	02/98	CART Precision Racing is Microsoft's officially licensed Indy car simulator.	**
Cart Racing	Sierra Online	02/98	Cart racer officially licensed by Championship Auto Racing Teams.	**
Circle of Blood	Virgin Int.	12/96	In this game, Paris means intrigue, mystery and some really bad jokes.	**
Close Combat	Microsoft	12/97	Command Axis or Allied forces fighting through Germany.	**
Comanche 3	NovaLogic	07/97	Helicopter combat flight sim.	**
C & C: Red Alert Aftermath	Virgin	12/97	The standard bearer real-time strategy game.	***
Cyber Gladiators	Sierra	02/97	This could be the best 3D PC fighting game ever!	**
Dark Earth	Microprose	01/98	A gothic, decaying world needs you to save it in this decadent adventure.	**
Deadlock 2	Accolade	03/98	Strategic planetary conquest is back and better than before.	**
Diablo	Blizzard	03/97	An addictive dungeon hack-and-slasher with style.	**
Die By The Sword	Interplay/Tantrum	04/98	Hack and slash your way through this ground breaking game!	***
Extreme Assault	Blue Byte	10/97	A futuristic attack helicopter sim.	**
F1 Racing Simulator	Ubi Soft	03/98	Excellent F1 sim with loads of options.	***
Fire Fight	Electronic Arts	10/96	A hell of a top down shooter.	**
G-Nome	7th Level	04/97	Multiple races, loads of mechs and hijackings make for a rockin' good time.	**
Graduation	Mixx	11/97	The player is a homeroom teacher in charge of five young ladies. Hmm	**
Grand Theft Auto	ASC Games	04/98	Law breaking fun with a top down perspective.	,
Greg Norman Golf	Grolier	10/96	More golf for your PC.	**
Heavy Gear	Activision	03/98	The game MechWarrior fans have been waiting for.	***



NINTENDO RETRO REVIEW

PUB. Williams . DEV. Midway . PLAYERS. I or 2 . RATING. ** PRICE. \$59.99

Oh dear. Nothing like taking a bad arcade game and converting it for the home - as if to make sure everyone suffers the same amount. It's evil arcade democracy at work. War Gods looks cool at first. Big 3D characters with lots of personality and many of the same ideas that made Mortal Kombat cool. However, the lousy control and response means that everything seems jittery and spastic. The use of 3D is confusing and seemingly unimportant to gameplay.

War Gods does prove, if nothing else, that the combo based learn-by-rote system isn't particularly suitable in a 3D game. It's not the worst game ever, but as the first big N64 fighter, it probably didn't please many.

We've actually proven that a monkey can beat the crap out of someone who's bothered to learn **War Gods**' moves two out of three times. OK, maybe not a monkey, but someone who just mashes the buttons down.

This is worth a rental, if only to satisfy your curiosity, but certainly not a purchase.





Game Buyer

ARCHIVE

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	RELEASE	COMMENTS
Hexen 2	Activision	12/97	Medieval first person shooter with id's mind blowing Quake engine.
iF-22	Interactive Soft	10/97	Technical snafus undermine a realistic and competent flight-sim.
iM1A2 Abrams	Interact. Magic	07/97	Gamers looking for an arcade-type tank simulation should look elsewhere.
Jedi Knight	LucasArts	12/97	The first person/third person shooter that gives you the force!
Journeyman Project 3	Broderbund	03/98	Aliens, artifacts and lost cities in a gorgeous graphic adventure.
Lose Your Marbles	SegaSoft	11/97	The game that claims to be more fun than Tetris. So, is it? Almost!
Madden '97	EA Sports	12/96	Madden shines on the PC.
Mageslayer	GT Interactive	12/97	Gauntlet-like, top-down shooter with medieval attitude.
Magic: The Gathering	Spectrum Holo.	06/97	The computerized version of Magic plays remarkably well.
Magic: The Gathering Battlemage	Acclaim	05/97	Acclaim's first entry into the real-time strategy genre comes as a disappointment.
Master of Orion 2	Microprose	03/97	Bigger and better than the first one? Well, mostly bigger.
MDK	Playmates	05/97	A revolutionary game to Murder, Death, Kill for
Mechwarrior 2: Mercenaries	Activision	01/97	Hired guns and giant robots add up to tons of fun!
Moto Racer	EA	09/97	Breath taking off road and on road motorcycle racing.
Myth: The Fallen Lords	Bungie	01/98	Ground breaking medieval real-time strategy.
NBA Live '97	EA Sports	03/97	EA's commitment to PC continued with another champion.
NBA Live '98	Electronic Arts	01/98	3D accelerated Basketball for your PC.
NHL '97	Electronic Arts	12/96	The most revolutionary hockey game of 96.
NHL Powerplay	Virgin	10/96	While PowerPlay for the PC can't even compare with console hockey, it is a solid effort.
Pax Imperia: Eminent Domain	THQ	11/97	Galactic conquest at it's best!
Pod	Ubi Soft	05/97	Wicked fast racer.
Postal	Ripcord	12/97	The top down shooter that takes social disfunction to a fun new level.
Quake	id Software	10/96	The most highly anticipated shooter of 96.
Quake II	Activision	02/98	Hot sequel to one of the best first person shooters ever.
Quake Mission Pack No. 1	Activision	06/97	New Quake levels officially approved by ID Software.
Rally Championship	Virgin Int.	06/97	Not from Sega, not as pretty, but maybe more satisfying.
Realms of The Haunting	Interplay	04/97	One part Resident Evil plus one part Doom equals a surprisingly good adventure.
Red Baron II	Sierra Online	02/98	Biplane dogfighting in the skies over Europe.
Riven	Acclaim	03/98	Point and click adventure makes it's way to PlayStation
Rocket Jockey	SegaSoft	02/97	Wedge a rocket between your legs for the ride of your life!
Sabre Ace: Conflict over Korea	Virgin	01/98	Screaming metal in the skies over Korea.
Screamers 2	Virgin	12/96	Screaming racer.
Space Bar	SegaSoft	10/97	Heavy Metal meets Sam Spade.
Star Fleet Academy	Interplay	11/97	Join Starfleet! See the Universe! Violate the Prime Directive!



PC RETRO REVIEW

PUB. LucasArts • DEV. LucasArts • PLAYERS. I • RATING. **** PRICE. \$49.95

Unlike Dark Forces, LucasArts' previous 3D shooter, Jedi Knight took full advantage of the Star Wars universe, allowing the player at last to use both The Force and more importantly, a light saber. Although very Quake-like in appearance, this is first and foremost a one player game. The levels are thoughtfully designed in a way that advances both plot and gameplay - something that cannot be said for Quake.

Graphically, this looks good running on a decent PC, but with a good (3DFX or Power VR) 3D card, the game looks astonishing, even now. Music is certainly weaker than the stunning sound effects, but still

Star Wars-y enough for most ears. Deliberate and good use of cinematic effects makes this an engrossing and enjoyable adventure.

The use of 'Force Powers' is an intrinsic and vital part of the gameplay, allowing the user to move objects, leap huge distances or even strangle an opponent at a distance (just like Darth Vader). Add to that a large,

impressive array of weapons and you have a game that we feel just as good about now as we did then.





Where a blast from the past goes under the looking glass...

IT'S LIKE TRON, ONLY BETTER...

"When the Coleco arrived in stores before Christmas in 1982, it seemed more like the arrival of flying cars, cold fusion or time travel. From what my friends said of this machine, it was so powerful, that God was trying to get it banned. I had an Intellivision and I didn't entirely welcome this jet-black newcomer. No. I wanted it dead. But then I played Zaxxon. The way I remember it, Zaxxon was a completely immersive experience, like the **Holodeck from Star** Trek. This Coleco thingie would change the very fabric of the universe. I fell into a miasma of vivid color and experience, with Looping, Ladybug and **Donkey Kong leading** the way. This machine had obselecence built out... "

During the heyday of personal video games, just as Atari's 2600 was reaching its peak, and Mattel's Intellivision was being outclassed by every arcade game, the US toy company Coleco released the incredible ColecoVision, at the time the most advanced and impressive console ever designed. It was the dream system. More colors, better graphics, more sound at that time we didn't even know what a processor did but Coleco had a fast one.

Realizing what the gaming public wanted, Coleco was even clever enough to launch the system with some killer apps. Perhaps the most killer of all was **Donkey Kong**. We didn't care that it was missing a whole level, or that the 'How high can you try?' sequences were gone, we cared only that, for the first time, a home console game actually looked like the arcade... kinda.

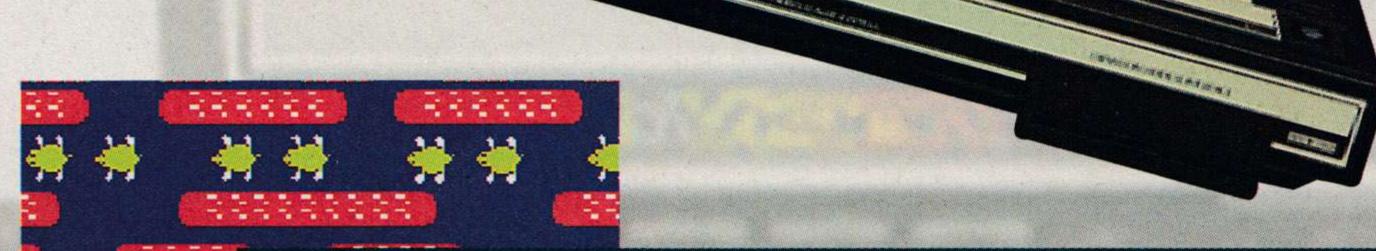
The Coleco's only weakness was its price. At the time
it was launched, the unit with
its two joysticks was \$199.
That's \$333 in today's money.
It was an awful lot of cash for a
games system, especially
since Atari was still going
strong and the 2600 cost about
half that amount.

Coleco kept the momentum going by announcing and releasing huge arcade hits like Zaxxon, Donkey Kong Jr., and Popeye. One unfortunate and possibly ill-considered side effect, was that Coleco also released these games for Atari and Intellivision machines. This

kind of depleted the need to buy a ColecoVision,

something Nintendo cleverly avoided in later years.

The machine built a strong following, thanks to consistently good games, great third party support (from Activision, etc.) and cool upgrades, like a steering wheel controller and a trackball. This all worked for a while, but the spectre of doom was looming on the horizon in the shape of the personal computer. Commodore 64 and Atari computers signaled the death knell for this phase of video gaming. Coleco did try to play catch up, releasing the ill-fated ADAM computer add-on, but it was too late. The great machine simply faded, with some dignity, into the mists of obscurity.







TECH SPECS

The ColecoVision was massively primitive by today's standards, with only 16 colors on screen at once, but it was

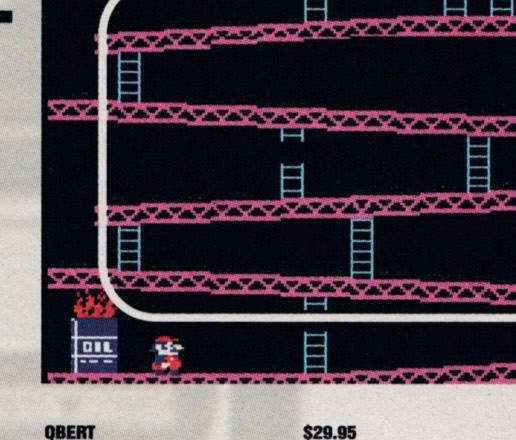
remarkably good at shifting sprites around and certainly capable of emulating the arcade games of the time. An 8-bit Z-80A CPU running at 3.58 Mhz handled the math, and ironically, the ColecoVison was technically very similar to today's Game Boy. 16k of video RAM and a simple sound chip completed the line up, and at the time, this was the very cutting edge of technology.





Game Buyer is just what it sounds like - a guide to buying games. The ColecoVision and many of the original games are still available from one source, a company named Telegames. Telegames also sells DINA, a ColecoVision compatible system for the bargain price of \$49.95. This little outfit has been selling (and even programming) classic games and systems for years and if you'd like to get in touch with them, here's how: www.telegames.com

All of the following games were still available at time of going to press. Sadly, many of the classics are now (and forever) out of stock.



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2010 ACTION	\$29.95	FORTUNE BUILDER	\$29.95
ALCAZAR	\$29.95	FRACTION FEVER	\$24.95
AMAZING BUMPMAN	\$29.95	FRENZY	\$24.95
ANTARCTIC ADVENTURE	\$24.95	FROGGER II	\$24.95
ARTILLERY DUEL	\$29.95	FROGGER	\$29.95
BASEBALL *(S)	\$24.95	FRONTLINE *(S)	\$29.95
BEAMRIDER	\$24.95	GORF	\$24.95
BLACKJACK/POKER	\$29.95	GROG'S REVENGE	\$29.95
BLOCKADE RUNNER	\$24.95	GYRUSS	\$19.95
BOXING *(S)	\$24.95	HERO	\$24.95
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DONKEY KONG, JR	\$24.95	OIL'S WELL	\$29.95
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WORD FUED	\$29.95
ZAXXON	\$19.95
ZENJI	\$19.95

*Requires: *(S) Super Action

*(R) Roller Controller

Controller *(D) Driving Module

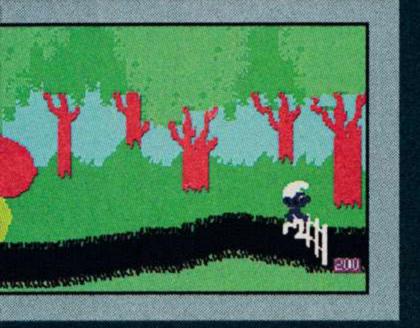
EMULATION STATION

Have a PC? Wanna play Coleco on it with an emulator? Try one of these sites, each of which features access to several emulators.

http://atlas.mri.tmd.ac.jp/mirror_doc/info-mac/app/colecovision-emulator-04.html

http://connx.simplenet.com/colecovision.htm http://www.komkon.org/~dekogel/files/mission/mission.txt

(the last one bizarrely allows you to emulate ColecoVision on an MSX computer-obscure enough for you?).



ZAXXON

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	RELEASE	COMMENTS	
Star Trek Generations	Microprose	08/97	Generic Star Trek movie license game.	***
Sub Culture	Ubi Soft	12/97	Undersea adventure with beautiful environments and challenging missions.	***
Terminator Skynet	Bethesda Soft	01/97	Terminator: SkyNET is going to give Quake a run for its money.	****
The Elder Scroll: Daggerfall	Bethesda Soft	12/96	A complete world to explore from the comfort of your own home.	****
Total Annihilation	GT Interactive	12/97	Real time warfare you won't want to miss!	****
Triple Play '97	EA Sports	11/96	The best arcade baseball game of 96 on the PC.	****
Twinsen's Odyssey	Activision	10/97	An imaginative adventure with extraordinary game play.	****
Uprising	3D0	12/97	A rule breaking combo of first-person action and real-time strategy.	****
Virtua Fighter PC	Sega	11/96	Sega's most valuable property on a PC near you.	****
Wing Commander Prophecy	Electronic Arts	02/98	The latest in the Wing Commander series (and it's much better now!)	****
Witchaven II	Capstone	10/96	A cross between Might and Magic and Doom.	***
Worms 2	Microprose	02/98	Cute worms are back for more wormicide.	****
X-Com Apocalypse	Microprose	10/97	More turn-based strategy and combat!	****
X-Men: Ravagers of Apocalypse	Wizard Works	12/97	Quake add-on that puts you in the world of the X-Men.	****
X-Wing Vs. Tie Fighter	LucasArts	07/97	The force is strong in this one!	****
Z	Virgin	11/96	Killed all your robots? Don't worry, we'll make more.	****
Zork: Grand Inquisitor	Activision	01/98	All the puzzles, humor and twisted notions that make Zork great, again.	****
2Xtreme	SCEA	01/97	A sequel that's just 2 little 2 late.	***

Games come and go. Many are remembered fondly, like fine wine, or hazy summer days. Many others, however, are thought of with less fondness. There are games out there with all the charm of rancid poop and the artistic grace of Screech from Saved By The Bell.

10. Cruis'n USA

If you were so short sighted that you couldn't see objects unless they were about a foot in front of you, then you might enjoy this. Otherwise, the terrible draw-in ruins a viable game completely.



9. War Gods

The worst fighting game on the Nintendo 64. Terrible, terrible gameplay is easily outclassed by the surprisingly good graphics.

8. ET: The Extra Terrestrial

Atari rushed this out in about ten minutes to cynically cash in on the popularity of the Spielberg movie. Its sucked so badly that

thousands of carts were buried in the desert.

7. Xperts

High res rendered graphics and no gameplay whatsoever. Some of the biggest sprites ever on the Genesis helped obscure the crappy game. Awful.

6. Time Killers

Another Genesis shocker, (a machine which had more than its fair share) a hideous, hideous conversion of a terrible fighting game. Very violent, but otherwise pathetic.

5. Spawn

Sony managed to take one of the most charismatic characters ever, and turn him into a bland blob, running around aimlessly in ill-defined tunnels, waiting for something cool to happen. It never did.

4. Fight For Life

Atari's Jaguar was meant to compete head to head with both PlayStation and Saturn. This dreadful, sub-par Virtua Fighter clone helped ensure that it never could. A disgusting game.

3. Bram Stoker's Dracula

Fight the Prince Of Darkness on Sega CD? No. Walk slowly through a boring, ill-conceived series of terrible levels, gasp as the hero takes hours to respond to your controls? Yes. Dumber than Keanu Reeves.

2. Cosmic Race

An appalling PlayStation racing game. Visually, it's the equivalent of being flushed



down the toilet with your own vomit. Gameplay is equally sweet.

1. Fantastic Four

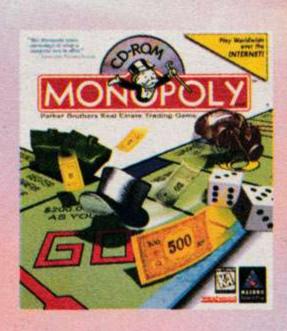
Acclaim's stinkiest hour. This game deserves special mention because the bare-faced gall required to include the word 'Fantastic' in the title. Not only is it not 'Fantastic', but it could well be the biggest waste of forty bucks in the history of games. Adding insult to injury is the fact that it takes ages to load. Piling the horror on top of that is the fact that the loading game, designed to ease the torture of waiting, is actually far better than the game itself.

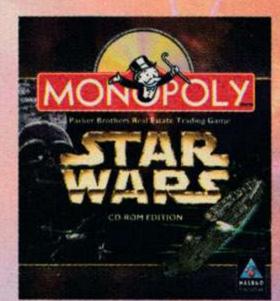
This is a game with literally no redeeming features. The game itself involves a lot of wandering around with the occasional stab at a button. Your favorite **Fantastic Four** characters have all been computer-rendered until they bear little or no resemblance to their cartoon-counterparts. A festering boil on the butt-cheeks of gaming.

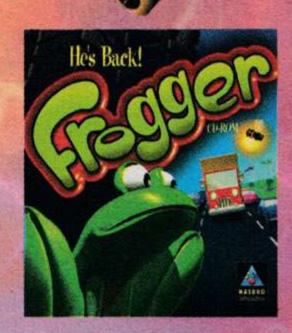
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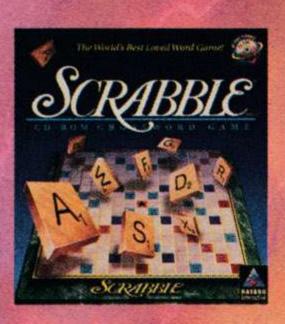
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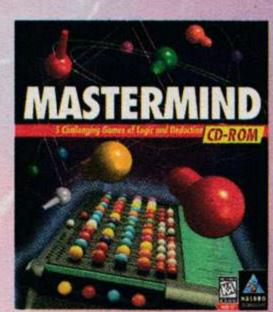




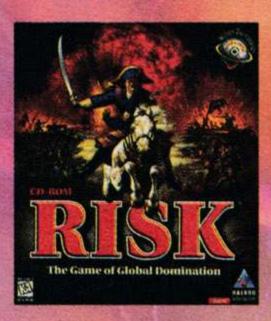














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THE TOP TEN BASEBALL GAMES EVER

If you long to be one of the Boys of Summer (but when it comes to physical activity you have trouble pulling yourself out of a Lazyboy recliner), baseball PC and videogames are for you. There's no shortage of new baseball games this month and you'll want to check out all the reviews of the hot new Baseball titles in this issue for the PlayStation, N64, and PC.

But every new game that comes out has a standard to live up to - a standard set by great games on a range of classic systems. The latest and greatest baseball games may feature cutting-edge graphics and feature galore, but

they're still hard pressed to compete with the games on this list in terms of pure fun. Hopefully, one of the newer baseball games will soon be deemed worthy of

joining this list, but it will take a monumental achievement to remove any of the current TopTen members from their hard earned positions.

Taking a look at the list, it's interesting to note that a significant number of the best baseball games appeared on the Sega Genesis and the 8-bit NES - which goes to show great game design doesn't require great technology. It should also be noted that there were a few other games that just didn't quite make the cut. Chief among these is Major League Baseball for the Intellivision, but we're sure everyone has a personal favorite that may or may not be on this list.

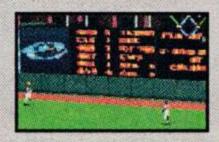
Since it doesn't look like anyone's going to pay you millions to hit below the Mendoza line, it's a good thing that a number of these games can still be found in discount used game bins.

I - World Series Baseball '98



3D polygonal players and the sweetest pitcher/batter interface of all time – bar none. WSB '98 's seamless gameplay is simply the best in terms of sheer playability, the only drawback being a limited stat engine. All games aspire to the standard set by WSB '98 and its worth picking up a Saturn just to play it.





PLAYSTATION

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	RELEASE	COMMENTS	
Ace Combat 2	Namco	08/97	Fighter plane games don't get any better than this!	*
AD&D Iron & Blood	Acclaim	12/96	Smelly fighting game with an inadequate license.	E
All Star Baseball '97	Acclaim	07/97	The Big Hurt does	
Alundra	Working Designs	01/98	Alundra is almost a dead ringer for a 32-bit version of Landstalker.	,
Andretti Racing	Electronic Arts	11/96	An excellent racing sim.	
Arcades Greatest Hits 2	Midway	02/98	Moon Patrol, Burgertime, Root Beer Tapper, Spy Hunter and Blaster.	
Armored Core	SCEA	12/97	Any fan of giant robot anime will want to climb into this game.	
Atari Collection 2	Midway	04/98	Paperboy, Road Blasters, Marble Madness, Millipede, Gauntlet and Crystal Castles.	
Auto Destruct	Electronic Arts	02/98	'Why no, officer, I don't know how many people I killed.'	
Ballblazer Champions	Lucas Arts	06/97	Update of LucasArts classic just barely makes_the grade.	
Battle Arena Toshinden 3	Playmates	06/97	Fighter with lots of new perks with some old pesky quirks.	
Battlestations	Electronic Arts	05/97	Yet another reason to say, 'You sank my battleship!'	
Beast Wars: Transformers	Hasbro	03/98	Transformer series gets a game Whoopee	
Beyond the Beyond	SCEA	10/96	The first true RPG for the PlayStation.	
Black Dawn	Virgin	12/96	An excellent flight sim/shooter with loads of options, and exceptional play mechanics.	
Blast Chamber	Activision	12/96	Flawed, but entertaining multiplayer game.	
Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain	Crystal Dyn.	12/96	Sharp fangs and a sharper sword — Kain's bite is deep and consuming.	
Brahma Force	Jaleco	06/97	This ain't Kileak, that's for sure.	
Bravo Air Race	THQ	10/97	Airplane racer on tracks Gimme a break.	
Broken Helix	Konami	07/97	A cross between Doom and Resident Evil.	
Broken Sword: SOTT	THQ	02/98	A graphic adventure features all that makes the genre good and bad at the same time.	
Bobsy 3D	Accolade	12/96	Cartoonish looking 3D platformer.	
Bug Riders	GT Int.	12/97	A racing game with giant flying bugs.	
Bushido Blade	SCEA	11/97	Trail blazing weapon based fighting game.	,
Caesar's Palace	Interplay	12/97	Blackjack, craps, roulette, three slot machines, and baccarat, but no poker!	
Carnage Heart	SCEA	03/97	Warning! You may be too stupid to play this game! Programmer needed.	

2 - World Series Baseball II



WSB II's gameplay still shines. The commentary on Greatest Nine (the Japanese version) is classic.

3 - World Series Baseball



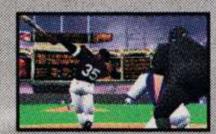
This is the game that really set the ground work for the Saturn WSB games to follow.

4 - Tony LaRussa Baseball



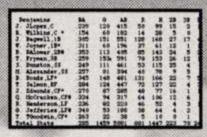
The first game that made the leap beyond the arcade-style game-play inherent to B-ball games on 8-bit systems.

5 - Bottom of the Ninth



When it comes to PlayStation baseball games, BOTN is the standout, even with its wonky fielding.

6- Earl Weaver Baseball



Earl Weaver was the game for sim freaks who just wanted to be a General Manager.

7 - Bases loaded II



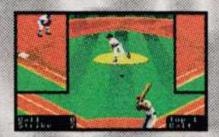
The Bases Loaded series offered a visual experience that went beyond the blocky pseudo-players of early videogames.

8 - Baseball Stars



Not many remember this game, but it offered season play and trades long before any other game.

9 - RBI Baseball



RBI Baseball garnered a following among actual baseball fans rather than those looking for a baseball-like videogame.

10 - Super Bases Loaded



Super Bases Loaded was a decent continuation of the favorite NES Bases Loaded series.

PLAYSTATION CONTINUED

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	RELEASE	COMMENTS	RATING
Cart World Series	SCEA	12/97	A racing experience that will appeal more to real race fans than gamers.	****
Castlevania: SOTN	Konami	11/97	Gameplay is, as ever, the main attraction of Castlevania, and it has it in spades.	****
Clock Tower	ASCII Ent.	11/97	Now here's a scary game. Run away from a guy with BIG scissors!	****
Codename: Tenka	Psygnosis	03/97	The PlayStation's answer to Quake.	****
Colony Wars	Psygnosis	12/97	The space flight sim that really puts you in the cockpit.	****
C & C: Red Alert	Virgin	12/97	The standard bearer real-time strategy game.	****
Contra: Legacy of War	Konami	1/97	Sometimes 3D just ain't what it's cracked up to be.	**
Cool Boarders	SCEA	2/97	A little light on the realism, but fun snowboarding just the same.	****
Cool Boarders 2	SCEA	12/97	Takes a good snowboarding formula and makes it better.	****
Courier Crisis	GT Int.	12/97	A really bad bike messenger game really bad.	*
Crash Bandicoot	SCEA	10/96	The PlayStation platformer mascot's debut.	****
Crash Bandicoot 2	SCEA	12/97	Sony's mascot makes an encore appearance.	****
Critical Depth	GT Int.	12/97	Twisted Metal underwater.	****
Croc	Fox Int.	10/97	Mario 64-esque platformer.	****
Darklight Conflict	Electronic Arts	10/97	Could have been great, but still better than Wing Commander 4.	***
Descent Maximum	Interplay	05/97	Descent taken to the maximum	****
Destruction Derby 2	Psygnosis	12/96	Outstanding sequel of a destruction derby game.	****
Die Hard Trilogy	Fox Int.	10/96	Thee times the action! Three times the explosions! A zillion times the blood.	****
Discworld 2	Psygnosis	10/97	Terry Pratchett's Discworld universe, with all the series' wacky characters.	****
Disruptor	Universal	12/96	First person shooter with psionic attitude.	****
Dragonball GT: Final Bout	Bandal	02/98	Anime fighter makes it Stateside.	***
Duke Nukem Total Meltdown	GT Int.	03/98	An average translation of a great PC game.	***
Dynasty Warriors	KOEI	09/97	Weapon-based fighter set in ancient China.	****
Excalibur 2555 A.D.	Sirtech	01/98	Try to find King Arthur's stolen sword in the 3D adventure.	***
F1 Championship Edition	Psygnosis	12/97	Everything you could want in an F1 racing game.	****
Fantastic 4	Acclaim	10/97	Mr. Fantastic would be embarrassed.	*
Felony 11-79	ASCII Ent.	10/97	Run down pedestrians, drive through buildings, crash into cop cars and have fun.	****
PIFA '97	EA Sports	01/97	Stinker of a striker game.	***
Fighting Force	Eidos	12/97	A button mashing take on Final Fight from Eidos and Core.	****
Final Doom	Williams	11/96	It's like Doom except What am I saying? It is Doom!	****
Final Fantasy Tactics	SCEA	01/98	Squaresoft's strategy oriented RPG.	****
Final Fantasy VII	SCEA	10/97	Squaresoft's four disc landmark RPG.	****
Formula 1	Psygnosis	12/96	When it comes to racing, F1 has the winning formula.	****
Frogger	Hasbro Int.	12/97	This frog would have been better off barbecued.	*

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	RELEASE	COMMENTS
G-Police	Psygnosis	11/97	Stunning 3D graphics, amazing gameplay - go for a flight with the G!
Gex: Enter the Gecko	Midway	03/98	Our favorite green lizard is back with more attitude.
Ghost in the Shell	THQ	01/98	One of the most original shooters for the PlayStation with an anime inspiration.
Goal Storm '97	Konami	05/97	The game that FIFA should have been.
Grand Tour Racing '98	Activision	10/97	A combination of both on- and off-road racing in one package.
Hercules	Virgin Int.	10/97	Adventure based on Disney Hercules movie.
In the Zone 2	Konami	01/97	A definite must buy, and one of the best sports games of 1997.
Independence Day	Fox Int.	04/97	A wannabe flight sim with a movie license to kill.
Intelligent Qube	SCEA	12/97	A puzzle game so good, it makes us forget what we ever saw in Tetris.
Jet Moto	SCEA	01/97	It's no WaveRace 64, but Jet Moto goes where its Nintendo rival can't.
Jet Moto 2	SCEA	12/97	More expansion disc than sequel, still a hell of a hoverbike racer!
Jimmy Johnson VR Football '98	Interplay	12/97	It's not that VR Football is bad, it's just not quite up to par with the big boys.
Kings Field II	ASCII Ent.	01/97	An RPG for the masses.
Kionoa	Namco	03/98	Strange, but fun adventure platform game.
Lethal Enforcers I & II	Konami	08/97	Lethal Enforcers I & II in one place - hope you like light gun games.
Lode Runner	Natsume	02/98	'80s classic gets a face lift.
Lost World	Electronic Arts	11/97	OK, The Lost World is pretty - really pretty. It also blows - really blows.
Machine Hunter	MGM Int.	08/97	Top down, 360-degree shooting mayhem.
Madden '97	EA Sports	11/96	The champ comes back after a season on the injured reserve list.
Madden '98	EA Sports	11/97	One of the better Maddens in years.
Marvel Super Heroes	Capcom	12/97	Marvel characters duke it out in this 2D fighter.
Maximum Force	Midway	11/97	By the team that developed Area 51 - Maximum Force is the same game.
Mechwartior 2	Activision	04/97	New missions and a new look take Mech combat to the next level.
Mega Man 8	Capcom	05/97	Mega Man 8 - the best 2D platformer on a 32-bit system since Guardian Heroes.
Mega Man X4	Capcom	11/97	Mega Man X4 is level after level of traditional 2D shooting.
Micro Machines V3	Midway	03/98	Mini cars and trucks race on household surfaces too cool.
MLB '98	SCEA	10/97	One heck of a good baseball game.
MLB Pennant Race	SCEA	12/96	The game is 'too little, too late'.
Monster Rancher	Tecmo	12/97	Raise monsters, make 'em fight, have a good time.
MK Mythologies: Sub-Zero	Midway	12/97	Clumsy attempt at an action game based on Mortal Kombat.

NEPALISTE ZOF

PLAYSTATION RETIRO REVIEW

PUB. Konami . DEV. Konami . PLAYERS. I or 2 . RATING. *** PRICE. \$39.99

for best console

basketball game.

Despite the success of titles like EA's NBA Live series and Sony's NBA Shootout series, console basketball games have yet to live up to the standards set by the likes of their football, hockey, and baseball videogame brethren.

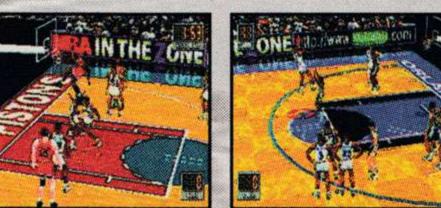
NBA In The Zone 2 may lack some of the simulation features offered by the latest round of hoops games, but the game still captures the essence of real basketball better than any other videogame (even its successor, NBA In The Zone '98). With collision detection superior to its competitors, ITZ 2 offers a satisfying level of control over realistic-looking NBA teams, with the most seamless and fluid control available.

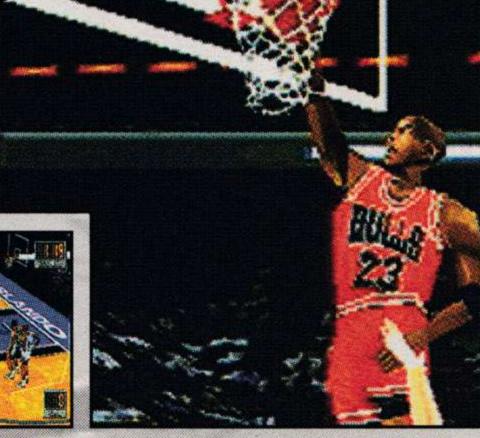
The game isn't without problems, but a spotty computer AI, overly simplistic alleyoops, and three-point shot happy gameplay is a small price to pay for game that

recreates the feel and tempo of a basketball game to near perfection.

Even though ITZ 2 is almost two years old, the game has aged gracefully and remains a strong contender







As an added bonus, the Create Player option can be used to manufacture an amazingly life-like Michael Jordan.

VIDEO GAME HEADQUARTERS



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GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	RELEASE	COMMENTS	
Motortoon Grand Prix	SCEA	11/96	A must own cartoony racer with style.	*
lamco Museum, Vol. 4	Namco	07/97	The Return of Ishtar, Assault, Ordyne, Pac-Land, and The Genji and The Heike Clans.	
Namco Museum Vol. 5	Namco	12/97	Collection including Dragon Spirit, Pac Mania.	H
lanotek Warrior	Virgin	04/97	A good case for re-inventing the wheel, or the shooter anyway.	*
NASCAR 198	EA Sports	11/97	You might be a NASCAR fan, and if you are, this is the perfect game for you.	
IBA Fastbreak '98	Midway	01/98	Average playing basketball game brought to you by Midway.	
VBA In The Zone '98	Konami	02/98	Ho-hum basketball game tries it again.	
NBA Live '97	Electronic Arts	12/96	EA's jump to polygons actually a step back?	
IBA Live '98	Electronic Arts	12/97	Live '98 is a great HOCKEY engine ruined by pesky basketball players and rules.	*
NBA Shoot Out '97	SCEA	05/97	This year, it's got game, the best NBA sim available.	*
ICAA Football '98	EA Sports	10/97	The first 32-bit college football game.	*
ICAA Gamebreaker	SCEA	11/96	From the developers of NFL Gameday comes the first 32-bit college football game.	*
ICAA Gamebreaker '98	SCEA	01/98	What can we say about a game that just does everything right?	**
leed for Speed II	Electronic Arts	06/97	Exotic cars, decent game play and graphics.	
Veed for Speed V-Raily	Electronic Arts	12/97	A bland auto zoom-zoomers you won't want from Santa.	BEE
lewman/Hass Racing	Psygnosis	04/98	A yawn of a dull time racing F1.	
IFL Gameday '97	SCEA	02/97	The best football game ever made gets even better!	**
IFL Gameday '98	SCEA	11/97	The best football game ever made gets even better! And better still!	**
IHL 197	Electronic Arts	12/96	Yet another adequate hockey game.	
IHL '98	EA EA	12/97	The only hockey game better than being there.	**
IHL Breakaway '98	Acclaim	12/97	Breakaway '98 is a good hockey game, not great, but very playable.	
				*
IHL Face Off '97	SCEA	12/96	Entertaining hockey experience.	
HL Face Off '98	SCEA Virgin Interpothus	12/97	Face Off was 97's PlayStation hockey game of the year, for '98, it's gotten better.	
HL Powerplay '98	Virgin Interactive	09/97	One of the best hockey games available.	*
lightmare Creatures	Activision	12/97	3rd person action title with werewolves and scary monsters - oh yeah.	*
uclear Strike	Electronic Arts	11/97	The latest excellent episode in the Strike series.	*
ddworld: Abe's Oddysee	GT Interactive	11/97	Outstanding 2D platformer in the tradition of Flashback.	*
Ine	ASC Games	02/98	Action packed shooter that is both great and flawed.	*
verblood	Electronic Arts	06/97	OverBlood, has the gameplay, but lacks any compelling excitement to back it up.	
andemonium	Crystal Dyn.	12/96	Wacky 2 1/2D platformer.	*
andemonium 2	Midway	12/97	The sequel to 96 sleeper hit captures the hearts of 2 1/2D platform fans once again.	*
arappe the Rapper	SCEA	10/97	Rap away your troubles and cares in this quixotic title from Sony.	**
eak Performance	Atlus	07/97	Blending standard street racing with a touch of rally action.	*
erfect Weapon	ASC Games	12/96	Fighting game or action game, this attempt at genre mixing is far from perfect.	
Persona	Atlus	02/97	All the right RPG elements are there, but never come together.	
'GA '98	Electronic Arts	12/97	PGA '98 is the best golf game available on the Playstation.	*
itball	Accolade	12/96	Odd futuristic ball game.	*
oint Blank	Namco	02/98	Light gun action that requires the GunCon.	*
orsche Challenge	SCEA	10/97	This looks a heck of a lot better than it actually is, but you do get to race a Porsche.	
owerslave	Playmates	06/97	Add Doom-style gameplay to alien folklore, and you've got Powerslave.	*
oy Poy	Konami	08/97	Incredible multiplayer game!	*
roject Horned Owl	SCEA	10/96	It's nice to look at, but PlayStation's first lightgun shooter misses its mark.	
sychic Force	Acclaim	02/97	You don't need to be a psychic to know this game isn't destined for greatness.	
uzzle Fighter	Capcom	12/96	More proof that great games don't have to be technological wonders.	**
luarterback Club '97	Acclaim	11/96	QBC '97 finds the right combination for victory.	*
age Racer	Namco	04/97	Rage Racer takes the scenic route, but is it the same old road?	*
tally Cross	SCEA	05/97	Finally, an off-road racer that really takes off!	*
tampage World Tour	Midway	01/98	Update of the arcade classic.	
laystorm	Working Design	08/97	Truly superior fast paced shooter.	*
laytracer	THQ	02/98	Flashy racer that leaves you wanting more.	- ^
	Electronic Arts	04/98		
Reboot	Interplay	12/97	The cancelled cartoon gets an 'Episode Zero' game that reveals the origin of it all! Blast and run down opponents in this futuristic racer.	*

SAME NAME	PUBLISHER	RELEASE	COMMENTS
el Fishing	Natsume	12/97	It's a fishing game, just like the title says.
eloaded	Interplay	02/97	Surprise! Gratuitous violence and gore can be boring.
esident Evil 2	Capcom	02/98	The granddaddy of all 3D adventures spawns the perfect brood.
sident Evil: Director's Cut	Campcom	12/97	The game that set the horror standard tries it again.
dge Racer Revolution	Namco	10/96	Ridge Racing is still fun, but it's running out of gas.
ish Hour	Psygnosis	06/97	A different approach to racing games provides some much needed variety.
ntient	Psygnosis	06/97	Ow! My head hurts. I had to play a largely text-driven adventure game all night.
adow Master	Psygnosis	02/98	Fantastic graphics, brilliant special effects, and lots of lens flare, but that's all.
nipwreckers	Psygnosis	12/97	A refreshing, top down action game.
cullmonkeys	Electronic Arts	03/98	Claymation looking platformer is pretty, but unsatisfying.
ul Blade	Namco	02/97	Flashy sword-based fighter - not to be missed.
viet Strike	EA	12/96	Classic gameplay and 32-bit presentation make a killer game.
awn	SCEA	01/98	Comic book antihero goes from bad movie to worse game.
ider	BMG Int.	03/97	The game with eight legs and a rocket launcher.
out Goes to Hollywood	Virgin	11/96	Does anyone like a soda game that's lukewarm and flat?
tackers	Tecmo	11/97	A competent challenge for fans of the puzzle genre.
ar Gladiator	Capcom	11/96	The cosmic crowd in Star Gladiator takes 3D fighting to the outer limits.
ar Wars: Masters of Teras Kasi	Lucas Arts	01/98	Great license, decent graphics, mediocre fighting game.
eel Reign	SCEA SCEA	11/97	Futuristic tank shooter.
reet Fighter Collection	Capcom	11/97	Super Street Fighter, Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo, and SF Alpha 2 Gold.
reet Fighter EX Plus Alpha	Capcom	11/97	Another Street Fighter game, but oh, so good!
	Ubi Soft		
eet Racer		12/96	It's cute. It's funny. It's the lighter side of 32-bit gaming.
ikoden	Konami	12/96	Konami gets back into RPGs in a big way.
vagman	Eidos	08/97	Bland adventure game.
ndicate Wars	Electronic Arts	09/97	The problem with Syndicate Wars is it was designed for the PC, not the PlayStation
of the Sun	SCEA	07/97	Just another 'caveman building a tusk tower' kind of a game.
1 Pin Alley	ASC Games	02/97	It's just like bowling
nnis Arena	Ubi Soft	03/98	Advanced Pong on grass.
st Drive 4	Accolade	12/97	The best roadracer on the PlayStation and a darn fun game.
st Drive Off Road	Accolade	06/97	Down and dirty off road racing.
e City of Lost Children	Psygnosis	05/97	Bringing the magic of a special movie to the PlayStation.
eme Hospital	Electronic Arts	05/98	Design and manage your own hospital in Bullfrog's interesting sim.
under Truck Rally	Psygnosis	05/97	Most off-road fans will find something here to like.
ger Shark	GT Int.	03/97	Going down? This submerged shooter ain't no Aquanaut's Holiday.
me Commando	Activision	12/96	It's said that Time will tell, but in this game, it just groans.
me Crisis	Namco	11/97	Namco's outstanding gun game, but you have to have the GunCon
bal No. 1	SCEA	11/96	Tobal No. 1 brings an entire new element to the fighting game genre.
kyo Highway Battle	Jaleco	12/96	The game that proves that speeding can be fun and profitable.
mb Raider	EIDOS	12/96	If the game doesn't blow you away, she just might.
omb Raider 2	EIDOS	12/97	She's bad, she's back and you know you want to play with her.
easures of the Deep	Namco	10/97	Underwater combat not to be missed.
ple Play '98	Electronic Arts	06/97	There is currently no baseball game close to the overall solidity of Triple Play '98.
visted Metal 2	SCEA	01/97	Lots of violence, weapons and outrageous autos.
ndal Hearts	Konami '	04/97	A turn-based strategy game wrapped in a neat RPG package.
tual Pool	Interplay	02/97	Play pool at home instead of in a bar.
IX Racing	Playmates	06/97	Average dirt bike racing game.
R Baseball '97	Interplay	05/97	Interplay's bid for the title comes up a couple of frames short.
3 Golf	VR Sports	12/96	VR Golf is a definite for golf fans that don't have access to a PC.
S.	THQ	12/97	A collection of stereotypes that happen to fight one another.
arcraft II: The Dark Saga	Electronic Arts	09/97	One of the best PC games of all time is okay on the PlayStation.
CW Nitro	THQ	02/98	Wrestling action for the die hard fan.
CW Vs. The World	THQ	06/97	WCW is a solid game that will appeal to wrestling fans.

NEXt Month

- E3
- MORTAL KOMBAT 4
- ROAD RASH 3D
- N20: Nitrous Oxide
- VR BASEBALL '99
- MIKE PIAZZA'S STRIKEZONE
- REDNECK RAWPAGE RIDES AGAIN
- INDEPENDENCE WAR
- . IGGY'S RECKIN' BALLS
- GRANSTREAM SAGA
- PANZER COMMANDER
- Adidas Power Soccer '98
- CARDINAL SYN
- STRATOSPHERE
- INDUSTRY GIANT
- BURNING RANGERS
- SOLIDERS AT WAR
 - EXTREME TACTICS
 - Bust A Move 2

WHAT'S IN STORE FOR AUGUST...

We hope you enjoyed what you've seen so far - this is just the beginning. Next month, we'll be bringing you a huge report from the E3 show in Atlanta - the biggest showcase for new games and new game hardware. We've already been invited to take a look at Sega's Katana - a machine that promises to bring a whole new generation of gaming alive. Better than a PC, with all the ease of use and fun you'd expect from a console. Katana could well be the next big thing. We'll be reviewing a host of new PC and console titles, including all the versions of Mortal Kombat 4, the PlayStation version of Road Rash 3D and a host of new RPGs. Find out about all this and a whole lot more in the August issue of Game Buyer.

-Frank O'Connor





BUST A MOVE 2



BURNING RANGERS



CARDINAL SYN

PLAYSTATION CONTINUED

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	RELEASE	COMMENTS	
Wild Arms	Capcom	06/97	Wild Arms is the RPG to play if you already spent two weeks with FF7.	****
Wing Commander IV	Electronic Arts	05/97	Fans of the series won't be disappointed, but everyone else will.	***
WipEout XL	Psygnosis	11/96	Futuristic racing never looked so good!	****
X-Men: Children of the Atom	Acclaim	03/98	Hmm A bad 2D fighting game	***
Xevious 3D/G	Namco	08/97	Well, it's Xevious in 3D (don't know what the G is for).	***
3D Baseball	Crystal Dyn.	11/96	Not be the best baseball game on the market, but still good.	****

SATURN

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	RELEASE	COMMENTS	
Albert Odyssey	Working Designs	09/97	Outstanding Japanese RPG.	****
Amak	Sega	04/97	A good, solid game, but it could have been much more.	***
Area 51	Williams	02/97	If shooting freaks from outer space is your thing	***
Bug Too!	Sege	02/97	The only cure for Bug Too's sad gameplay may be Raid.	**
Bust A Move 3	Natsume	12/97	Bubble popping puzzle game you simply must play.	****
Command & Conquer	Westwood	04/97	C&C marks the return of real time strategy for home consoles.	****
Crimewave	Eidos	02/97	Like shooting, driving and donuts? Here's your game.	***
Crypt Killer	Konami	06/97	Crypt Killer is like a shooting gallery at the country fair.	***
Dark Savior	Sega	02/97	The first truly great RPG on the Saturn.	****
Daytona USA CCE	Sega	01/97	Calling this game 'Daytona Remix' would have been closer to the truth.	****
Decathlete	Sega	10/96	Sega raises the bar for track and field games.	****
Die Hard Arcade	Sega	04/97	Arcade perfect, arcade short.	****
Dragon Force	Working Designs	02/97	The perfect console strategy game.	****
Duke Nukem 3D	Sega	12/97	The best console conversion of the Duke Nukem 3D experience.	****
Enemy Zero	Sega	02/98	Fly for the Emperor!	****
Fighters Megamix	Sega	03/97	Fighting Vipers & Virtua Fighter. A fighting game fan's dream come true.	****
Fighting Vipers	Sega	12/96	The fully loaded model of the Cadillac of fighting games.	****
Grid Runner	Activision	12/96	A futuristic blend of Tag and Capture the Flag.	****
Herc's Adventures	Lucas Arts	10/97	A top-down action adventure based on the mythological exploits of Hercules.	***
Hexen	GT Interactive	03/97	Attention, wizards and warriors, your game is here.	****
Last Bronx	Sega	01/98	Brutal fighting from the masters at Sega.4	****
Lunacy	Atlas	05/97	Lunacy plays like a movie - a mixed blessing at best.	***
Machinehead	Eidos	12/96	An average first person shooter.	***
Manx TT	Sega	09/97	Outstanding motorcycle racing game on the Isle of Mann.	****
Mass Destruction	ASC Games	12/97	Mass Destruction plays just like it reads. Top down tank action.	****
Mr. Bones	Sega	12/96	One of the most bizarre platformers ever.	****
NFL '97 *	Sega	02/97	Looking for a quality football game? This ain't it	**
Nights	Sega	10/96	In an industry when anything can happen, 'anything' just did.	****
Ogre Battle	Atlus	09/97	Ogre Battle offers nothing new to the RPG/strategy genre.	***
Princess Maker 2	Ignite	09/97	Raise the princess of your dreams Oh, just play it already	****
Saturn Bomberman	Sega	10/97	As Bomberman games go, this is probably the best since Super Bomberman 2.	****
Scorcher	Sega	06/97	Scavenger's second Saturn title looks more like a tombstone than a milestone.	****
Scud	SegaSoft	05/97	Based on the popular underground comic book series.	***
Sega Ages Vol. 1	Sega	08/97	Space Harrier, Afterburner 2, and Outrun	****
Sega Touring Car Championship	Sega	01/98	Home conversion of Sega arcade racer.	***
Shining the Holy Ark	Sega	08/97	The best Phantasy Star RPG yet.	****
Sky Target	Sega	09/97	Sky Target fails to live up to expectations.	***
Sonic 3D Blast	Sega	01/97	A less than dramatic 32-bit debut for gaming's favorite hedgehog.	****
Sonic Jam	Sega	11/97	Sonic 1, 2 and 3 on the Saturn.	****
Sonic R	Sega	01/98	Funky racer featuring Sega's blue hedgehog.	****
Steep Slope Sliders	Sega	01/98	Fun and exciting snowboarding for the Saturn.	****
Street Fighter Alpha 2	Capcom	11/96	The latest version of Street Fighter is the best ever.	***

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	RELEASE	COMMENTS	
Three Dirty Dwarves	Sega Soft	11/96	Difficult, but fun update to the classic puzzle/platformer.	****
Toshinden Ura	Sega	02/97	Apparently, URA really stands for Ugly, Repetitive, and Awful.	**
Virtue Cop 2	Sega	01/97	Excellent console translation of arcade lightgun game.	****
Virtua Fighter Kids	Sega	11/96	A fighting game with cute kiddle characters that packs punch.	***
Virtual On	Sega	01/97	Console conversion of arcade game. Giant robots duke it out	****
Virtual Open Tennis	Acclaim	10/96	Tennis to play when it's raining.	***
Winter Heat	Sega	03/98	Surprisingly good winter sports for your Saturn.	****
World Series Baseball '98	EA Ganada	09/97	The most detailed baseball game you can play!	****
World Series Baseball II	Sega	11/96	The best baseball game of 96.	****
World Wide Soccer 97	Sega	12/96	The sports game of 96. Soccer fans have gotta love it!	****

THETOPIEN RACING GAMES EVER

I - Gran Turismo

Trying to figure out which racing game to buy? Take a look right now at the top ten racing games ever made.

Each month, we'll break down genres, list classics and even tell you which games to avoid. No more guesswork, no more rental risks, just solid buying advice. Game Buyer will show you the easy path to gaming satisfaction, giving you the biggest bang for your buck and the best read on the shelves.

Comprehensive, cool and correct. That's the kind of information you can expect in every issue of Game Buyer!







Just possibly the world's most beautiful racing game. No, wait. Forget about possibly. This IS the world's most beautiful racing game!

2 - 1080 Snowboarding



No cars, but plenty of racing. Pick a dude, pick a board and get into the most realistic environments ever created on a console. Add stunts and it's a dream.

3 - WipCout XL



Futuristic, techno-inspired racing in a high-octane environment. WipEout XL borrows from every racer and the result is the fastest, brightest racer around.

4 - Moto Racer



Motorcycles finally get a decent interpretation. Moto Racer looks and feels like real biking. All that's missing is the leather and the road rash.

5 - F-Zero



6 - WaveRace 64



Jet Bikes, water and dolphins all make an appearance on this N64 masterpiece. Still unrivalled in the graphics department - a game that will make you wet.

7 - Daytona USA



Sega's stalwart still can't be beat for powerstiding madness. The arcade version is hugely superior, but the Saturn conversion is very, very nice.

8 - Rage Racer



Namco's third PlayStation installment in the Ridge Racer series. Bigger tracks, better graphics and more options. A fast-paced, twitchy delight.

9 - Super GT

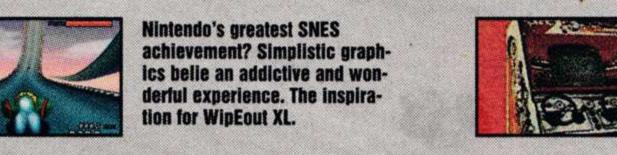


Sega's Model 3 racer has the best graphic ever seen on a racing game. The cars look real, the tracks look unreal and the sitdown unit is a thrill ride.

10 - Super Sprint



Old-school racing. A birds-eye view of Formula One racers who leap chasms, power up and have fun. Best of all, three players can race at the same time.







SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION
PUBLISHER: Capcom
Release Date: Sept/October

Boasting sixteen never before seen characters, Capcom's Rival Schools will capitalize on a unique fighting system incorporating the use of a two-person fighting team made up of the actual fighter and his/her sub-character. Certain moves allow your team to pair up for a devastating attack. Depending on which characters you pick, you can even pull off a super move that grants you extra life. At the end of each round, you'll have the choice to switch between sub and main characters, giving you a chance to fight the

With several supermoves allocated to each fighter, you'll be able to choose your character from a pool including headmasters, a perky schoolgirl, a buxom, spandex-clad school mistress, and the usual delinquent, detention-bound punks. But the most innovative aspect of **Rival Schools** will be the implementation of a mode that allows you to customize the features of your fighter's face. Personalizing the look of your character adds a

whole new dimension to what looks to be a rather innovative 3D polygonal brawler. The closest thing to this would be ASCII's upcoming **Fighter Maker** title, which grants you the ability to 'virtually' create your own fighting game with systems and combos. Look for both later this year.



SYSTEM: N64
PUBLISHER: Midway
Release Date: October

One of the most outrageous arcade games to emerge in the sports genre during the past year has to be Midway's NFL Blitz. The arcade experience of break-

neck speed, bizarre and brutal moves, as well as unbelievable plays are sure to make it into the console version of the game, according to Midway. Full NFL licensing is also part and parcel of the N64 version, which doesn't promise to be a true football simulation, but more of a thrilling tribute to the action aspects of the sport. Offensive players can be tackled with torturous-looking



helmet grabs, knocked down and literally pummeled by the defense or simply taken apart by unrealistic sevenyard flying dives from the opposing team. It's pure arcade bliss and Midway promises the full experience will be translated faithfully for the home ports with only a few changes to enhance the console gameplay.

RPG's En Masse

The biggest gap in the N64's game library is finally getting filled as Japanese developers are pouncing on 64-bit RPGs. Imagineer leads the pack with Desert Island and Suu, two polygonal RPGs for the 64DD. Developer Quest is programming a 64-bit update to its classic Ogre Battle series. Kemco's NES hit Shadowgate likewise makes the transition to N64 on cartridge. Natsume is preparing two RPGs for release in '99, Harvest Moon 64 and Legend of the River King 64. Another Japanese company, Bottom Up, is working on a monster sim RPG by the name of Onegai Monsters. Chunsoft is planning a new chapter in its Mysterious **Dungeon** series and Intelligent Systems is developing Fire Emblem 64 for Nintendo. In addition to the in-house developed

Earthbound 64 and Mario RPG 2,
Nintendo's Marigul teams are also working
on DT, Kyojin no Doshin and Doubutsu
Banchou — all tentative titles.





Porta - REVIEW Fighter's Megamix

Fighting game translations on portable systems require a little patience in terms of sacrificing some speed and detail in graphics, but you still can't beat the price and the mobility that they offer. Fighter's Megamix on the game.com follows much in the same stead. Featuring all of the options available in the Saturn console version, the only real drawback on the game.com is the moderate compromise

in controls and framerate. Little argument can be given for not owning a copy of the game if you have a game.com as it is a great version of an arcade classic.

- Fighter's Megamix
- Game.com
- Tiger Electronics
- \$29.95



Play Game Boy On Playstation

Datel, makers of the Game Shark, have come up with something called the 'Game Booster.' This new device plugs into the back of your PlayStation and allows you to play Game Boy titles on your television. Currently there are only plans for this peripheral to be released in the UK.

SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION, PC PUBLISHER: EA

RELEASE DATE: FALL '98

One of the most anticipated racing games will be making its appearance later this year on the PS and PC platforms. The original Moto Racer wowed racing fans with tight controls, arcade play and pristine graphics. The sequel is geared up to capitalize on these strengths and up the ante by including 40 tracks in five different locations, a course editor that allows players to create their own tracks, as well as multiplayer support over the Internet for the PC version or split screen options for the PlayStation port. PC builds of the game will also support the necessary 3D accelerator cards and even AGP-ready boards.



BUST-A-MOVE 2

Although the original Bust-A-Move has yet to be released in the US (look for it later this year), Japanese developer Enix has already begun development on the sequel. The game, in which you must dance 'Parappa-style' to a variety of music tracks ranging from hip-

> hop to disco, has been a raging success in Japan and in US import markets. Besides an easier-to-read control system, players can expect more female dancers in the game in the sequel. One feature bound to please and disturb is the possibilty of more realistic breast models.

Darkstalkers 3 marks Capcom's commitment to exposing the American gaming public to titles that may or may not be as popular Stateside as they are in Japan. Voted the most popular arcade fighting game in Japan, Darkstalkers 3 includes all the familiar characters from the original

lineup and adds four new fighters into the mix. The thematic backbone for the latest title in the series introduces Jedah, the 'Messiah of Darkness,' who is attempting to lay claim to all the various fighters' souls. Along with Jedah, other new characters include Morrigan's sister, Lilith, as well as QBee, the queen of (you guessed it) the bees, and B. B. Hood, a wee blond girl toting some serious firearms.

Darkstalkers 3 will include both a Versus and Training Mode to participate in, but the most interesting will be the Visual Story Mode which will follow each character's story as well as display some very impres-

sive **Darkstalkers** art gallery pics. The 4MB Ram cart on the Japanese Saturn gives the import version an edge over the upcoming PS domestic port, so we'll see how well it fares visually, when it arrives in stores this fall.

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• Fighter's Megamix

Game.com

Tiger Electronics

• \$29.95

Game Com SIVE LABE CONSEC CO

TIGER POCKETS HANDHELD GAMES

In a recent announcement, Tiger Electronics stated that they will be supporting new, smaller version of its game.com handheld gaming system, appropriately labeled the game.com.pocketpro.

Targeting more serious gaming enthusiasts with its new system,
Tiger also announced a rather impressive lineup of titles already in development for the pocketpro, which is already backwards compatible with game.com cartridges. The lineup of games includes Resident Evil

2, Holyfield Boxing, Madden '99, as well Sonic Jam and Fighter's Megamix.

Featuring a back-lit screen, it also has many of the same options available on the game.com, but now in a more compact shape.

game.com.pocketpro gamers will also be able to hook up and access text-based email services over the Internet with the use of Tiger's Internet cartridge, where they can also post high scores and download cheats. The system will retail for around \$59.95 and cartridges will remain in the \$20-30 range.

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SYSTEM: PLAYSTATION, PC PUBLISHER: EA RELEASE DATE: FALL '98

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Game Buyer

COMING

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Konami Gives the E3 goods

Metal Gear Solid

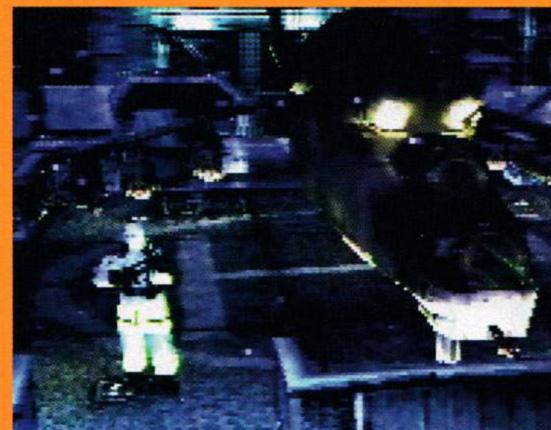
SYSTEM: Playstation Release Date: October

> The impending US release date for MGS is inching ever nearer and the hype surrounding the title in the gaming press is about to reach a feverish pitch. The game, itself, is based on the most simple of concepts: fulfill your objective, kill only when necessary, and try not to be seen or heard. Easier said than done, especially in a market

> > already flooded with mindless action titles. MGS might just be the next step up for gaming on the PlayStation. Hideo Kojima, the game's creator, has com-

mented that this installation in the Metal Gear series will attempt to integrate storyline and character development into the actual gameplay as well as through cinemas. With a large cast of characters populating the game, MGS seems to promise an almost RPG-ish appeal, but mixes it up with a lot of action and strategy. Features, such as the ability to toggle between first person and third person views and various equipment, such as nightvision goggles and binoculars, will hopefully deepen the strategy and immersion of such an ambitious title. The current ship date in Japan is set for September with the US date in October.







SYSTEM: Playstation Release Date: August

Konami takes another look back at classic gaming beyond Metal Gear Solid and comes up with a 3D update of the Contra series. A large variety of weapons and a planet overrun with alien lifeforms is the perfect environment for C- The Contra Adventure. Your character is able to explore a 3D environment, while strafing, jumping, firing and dueling it out with big bosses and various

extraterrestrial vermin.



The current interest in classic backstock gaming makes a strong presence in Konami's lineup, but doesn't get in the way of their working on other nonantiquity titles, such as the highly anticipated RPG, Suikoden 2. The company remains very quiet about all their upcoming titles, but stay tuned for updates.

Other titles

SYSTEMS: PlayStation, N64 Release Date: 1998

In addition to MGS and Contra, Konami is also preparing a sequel to the party classic, Poy Poy2, along with an underwater action adventure entitled, G-Force and a polygonal brawler, Kensei-Sacred Fist, for the PlayStation. The N64 will be see a Superstar Soccer update, as well as the 3D adventure, Survivor.





The Ultimate Fighting Game Anime!

After stealing the sun and plunging the Earth into darkness, the Vampire Lord Demitri plans his return to and conquest of the Demon World as other creatures of the Dark and the oppressed humans plot against him! All of the amazing monster characters from the hit Capcom franchise square off in exciting battle after battle in this stunningly animated series based upon the arcade and Sega game Night Warriors (AKA: DarkStalkers/Vampire Hunters). Look for a new Capcom release for the Playstation this fall, and don't miss this exciting four volume series on video!

English

Volume 1 Coming August 25, 1998

PIONEER

The Art of Entertainment

DARK SCHNEIDER IS THE . . .

SWORDS & SORCERY - BETRAYAL & BLOOD

A lone warlock, freed from years of imprisonment, stands against an army of destruction bent on world conquest and the resurrection of an ancient evil. But Dark Schneider is not protecting the desperate people of Meta-Rikana out of the goodness of his heart. After all, they were the ones who imprisoned him for leading this same army against their city the first time. However, he's not about to let his old army, his old generals, and his ex-girlfriend show him up. Besides, his new girlfriend is counting on him and it's been a while since he had some fun...

Call Pioneer Customer Service at 800-421-1621 for more information or check out our website at www.pioneeranimation.com

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Pioneer Anime products are available from these and other fine video and comic book retailers:











THERE'S MORE TO LIFE THAN

The Ultimate big screen TV

Drool. Faint. Sweat. Do whatever you have to do, but prepare to enjoy the ultimate TV experience. NEC is in a race with every other Japanese TV company to produce the sexiest idiot-box ever to grace a living room. Even the name is sexy. Hi-Vision PlasmaX PX-50V2 makes it sound super-futuristic and complicated. It is. This flat-screen, Gas Plasma, high defintion TV is now on sale in Japan at a massive \$25,000 and an equally massive 50 inches of crisp, clear and yes, arousing picture quality.

Gas Plasma is the latest TV technology and works in a technically mysterious way rivalled only by flying cars and time travel. It displays over a million pixels. It is less than ten centimeters thick and you can hang it on your wall. If that wasn't pant-bustingly exciting enough for you, then perhaps the fact that it's finished in brushed metal is. Still not wetting your pants? How about a touch-screen LCD remote control big enough to eat your TV dinner from? Even the speakers are cool, a tall, slim, contradictory excercise in simplicity and complexity.

This is quite simply the best TV ever made and in a sick, twisted way, worth every penny. The only problem is that it's designed to use Japan's new analog HDTV (High Definition Television) system - currently incompatible with American broadcasts. Also, the American HDTV system will be digital - so the TV simply won't work even when HDTV arrives here. However, if you're completely insane, have \$25,000 kick-

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the Universe, then buy one, and use
it to play games on. And you'll
need to rewire your house so
that there's no messy cables
hanging down the wall to
spoil the clean lines. We
guess you could put a rubber tree beside it or something to hide the mess.
We love it. We know
you love it too.

FIES: not meat nor cheese!

The french fry wars seem to concentrate soley on the difference between McDonalds and Burger King.

Whatever - there's more to fries than

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ing their hot potato treats. They changed the oil and now they're crispier, but they still don't taste as good as Mickey D's. However, we did a big survey, for your benefit of course, and came up with some rather surprising spud-related conclusions.

JACK IN THE BOX

Chili cheese curly fries are an extreme addition to any fry gourmand's arsenal. The crispy, spicy, meat-drenched monstrosities are an acquired, yet strangely

delectable, taste. Eat 'em quick though, or you'll find a solid blob of nuclear death when they cool down.

IN 'N OUT BURGER

The use of real potato and high-quality oil ruins these fries... unless you know the secret order system. Just ask for your fries 'well-done' and behold, the crispiest, evillest, nastiest fries in California (In 'N Out is expanding, hopefully Nationwide).

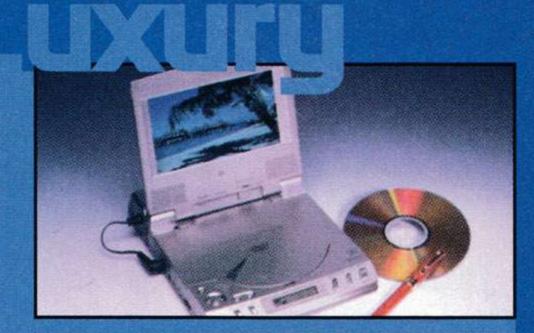
Star Wars cometh - the crowd goes wild

GAMES, ISN'T THERE?

Principal shooting has already wrapped up on the first of the new Star Wars trilogy. Rumor in Hollywood has it that the first trailers will be shown at theaters in Fall...and you know a movie is gonna be HUGE when people start leaking rumors about the trailers.

Panasonic has unveiled the absolute pinnacle of travelling snobbery in the shape of this unbelievably cool laptop DVD

player. It allows the user to watch up to two hours (battery life y'see) of crisp DVD goodness while on the move. Tough to see how this could be better - unless the price drops.





PALM 3 NICE 'N' HANDY

Just buy a US Robotics Pilot? Was it immediately rendered extinct by the crazy new backlit Palm Pilot? What about Palm 3, yet another upsetting addition to the brilliant Palm Pilot line? Make you feel like technology is moving too fast? The Palm Pilot line of organizers is slick and brilliantly conceived. They immediately eclipsed Apple's Newton PDA and became the premier handheld organizers. The Palm 3 is the latest addition to the family and features more RAM, more features and a heftier price tag.

The best thing about the Pilot series though, is that it hooks directly to your PC (or Mac) allowing you to input text and information faster and more accurately than with the stylus that comes stan-

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GREASY

AND

G000

FATBURGER

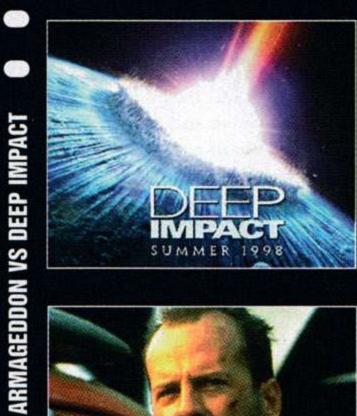
Small chain of (mostly) LA-based burger joints (featured in lots of rap videos) which serves a truly disgusting fry alternative. Chili-Cheese Fritos. Even the sound of it inspires fear.

McDONALDS

The quintessential American french fry, McDonalds has set the standard for fast food fries for years. A disturbing inconsistency in quality occasionally rears its ugly head, but the classic McDonalds fry will not disappoint in terms of flavor, texture, and quantity.

BURGER KING

There is no doubt that the overall consistency is far superior to McDonalds. However, a hot, crisp batch of Ronald's shoe-string fritters still can't be touched, not even by Mr. Potato Head himself.





ARMAGEDDON VS **DEEP IMPACT**

Who would win in a fight? Bruce Willis or Morgan Freeman? OK, Bruce Willis, but what if Bruce Willis had just been hit in the face by a mile-wide asteroid? Nobody can truly answer these questions (because they're really stupid questions), but two summer blockbuster movies might. Armageddon and Deep **Impact** are set to square off at the box office.

Both movies have roughly the same plot. A potatoshaped asteroid is about to destroy the world. Where they differ is that Deep Impact is a morose look at how humans behave in the face of doom, while Armageddon is all about Bruce Willis and his gang of miners going to space to kick the asteroid's ass. And as we know, asteroids are inherently evil. Our guess? The asteroid dies at the end.

ARMAGEDDON VS DEEP IMPACT THERE'S MORE TO LIFE THAN

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Chili cheese curly fries are an extreme



Two titans of the gaming industry — Electronic Arts (EA) and Square Co., Ltd. — are teaming up to launch not just one, but two joint ventures, one on each side of the Pacific.

The first new company will be called Square Electronic Arts LLC, based in Costa Mesa, CA. This subsidiary will have the exclusive North American publishing rights to all future Square titles, including upcoming games such as Parasite Eve, Bushido Blade 2, and Xenogears. Square will own 70% of

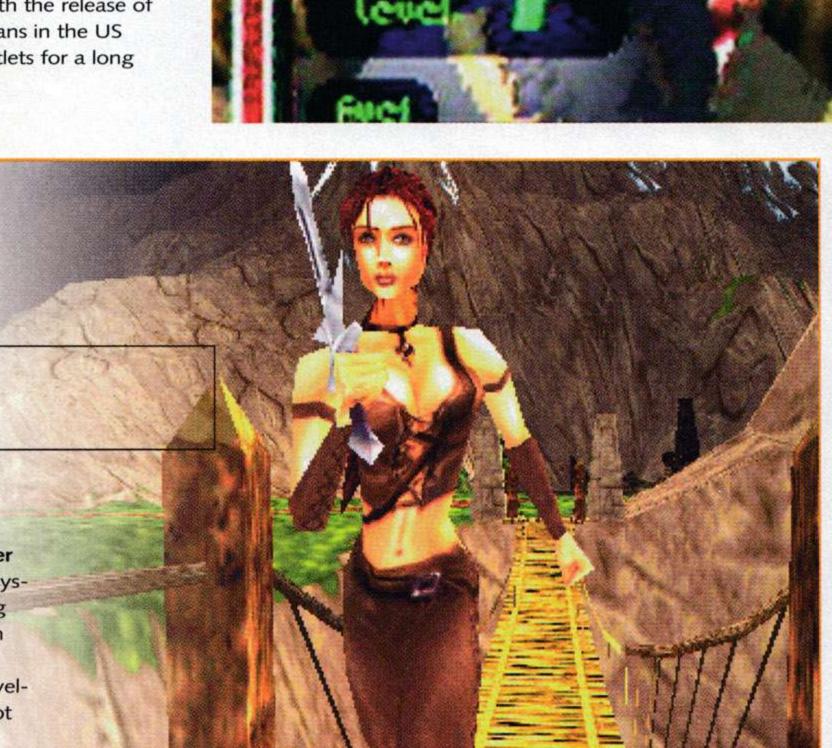
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A second joint venture will be launched in Tokyo, Japan. Called Electronic Arts Square, KK, this company will localize and publish EA games from EA Sports, Origin and Bullfrog in the Japanese market. With this one, EA will own 70% of the company, while Square gets 30%.

The partnership bodes well for both parties in that Square will receive solid support as it plans to venture deeper in

the PC market, while EA gets a good boost in its long list of published titles. The addition of Square to EA's US development houses which includes Origin (Ultima series), Bullfrog (Populous) and in-house sports developers means even bigger sales and greater revenue. EA's choice to go ahead with the release of the controversial RPG, Xenogears, bodes incredibly well for RPG fans in the US and creates an indefinite pipeline of Square titles into domestic outlets for a long time into the future.







SYSTEM: PC

PUBLISHER: Psygnosis Release Date: January '99

An early look at one of Psygnosis' distant PC titles revealed a rather visually impressive glimpse into the medieval world of Drakan, the closest thing to a Panzer Dragoon/Tomb Raider crossover that we've seen for any system. Gameplay revolves around the adventures of a young heroine and her dragon in a completely 3D world, wherein action and danger awaits in the skies as well as on the ground. Flight appears very smooth, even in very early development stages, while ground combat and travelling on foot mimics the camera angles and gameplay found in Tomb Raider. Spanning over five worlds and packing in over fifty different weapons, Drakan, though early, may prove that Psygnosis does have the 3D adventure genre under wraps after the ill-fated Rascal. Stay tuned for updates.





Porta-Review

The Saturn compilation of classic **Sonic** games has arrived in portable form for the game.com! Featuring all three of the Genesis **Sonic** platformers, the mini-cart is a premiere bargain for game.com owners looking to play through either **Sonic and Knuckles, Sonic 2**, or **Sonic 3**. You're also given the option to play through any of the titles using either Sonic, Tails or Knuckles as your lead character.

While the display falls victim to the occasional slow-down, the cart doesn't fail in delivering all the levels and stages of each title. A worthy entry into the handheld gaming genre.

- Sonic Jam
- Game.com
- Tiger Electronics
- \$29.99



Capcom Generations Vol. I & II

Capcom is getting ready to launch their very own brand of classics on CD, the Capcom Generations collection. The first two in line are to be released this fall. The first volume in the Generations line will include air combat classics: 1942, 1943 and 1943 Enhanced. The second compilation will be comprised of Capcom's super popular Ghosts 'n' Goblins line.

Youngblood has been canceled on the PlayStation. Despite the fact that the game code had been worked on for quite some time and there were playable examples shown to the press, GT decided that the lack of network options available on the PlayStation detracted too much from the playability of title. The PC version is still on track for release.

Interplay has recently announced the opening of a new film and video division to head up productions based on characters and licenses owned by the company. We hope this doesn't lead to more movies like Super Mario Brothers or the more recent Mortal Kombat: Annihilation.

NewKidCo and Alpha have announced two PS titles based on the Sesame Street license. Elmo's Magical Number Tour and Elmo's Magical Letter Tour are coming in early October. These titles are unique in their attempt to appeal to younger audiences on the PlayStation.

Megaman Legends on the PS has been delayed until September. Despite being finished, Capcom has decided to hold back on the release of this title until the Christmas buying period. It is hoped that they will be able to draw more market attention to it at that time.

French publisher Titus could be the first company to create a plug-in update for a cartridge game. According to the company, it is developing Hercules: Legendary Journeys and Xena: Warrior Princess for the N64 with the 64DD in mind. The disk-based updates would add new characters and missions to the actionadventures, once the drive debuts in 1999.

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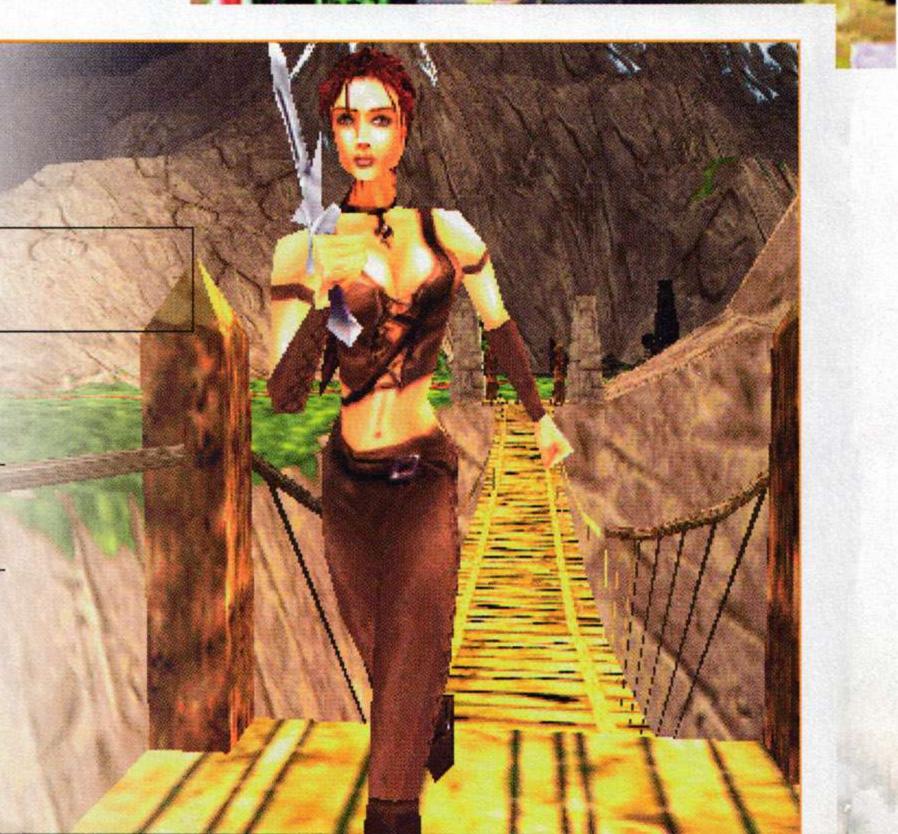
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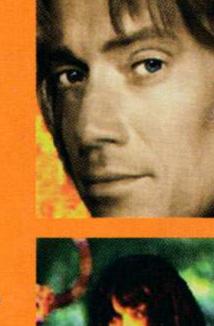
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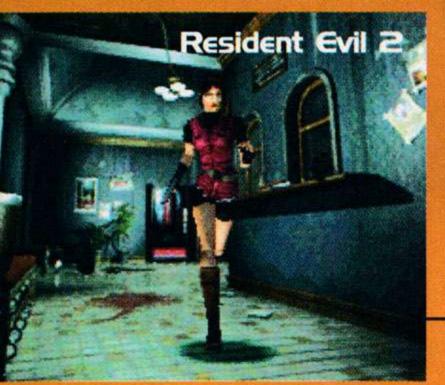
ame buyer

NCOMING

154

Like everything in this industry, all titles and dates are completely subject to change at the developer or publisher's whimsy. (We actually have parties when a game releases on its projected date!) Unfortunately, some titles may even be cancelled altogether.





PlayStation Releases

JUNE

Adidas Power Soccer **Psygnosis** Alien Resurrection Fox Int. Apocalypse Activision Fox Sport Golf Fox Int. Fox Sport Soccer Fox Int. Silhouette Mirage Working Designs Wreckin' Crew Sirtech **Azure Dreams** Konami Hardball 6 Accolade Touring Car Champ. EA TH-Q Granstream Saga Deadball Zone GT Int. N20: Nitrous Oxide Fox Int. **NBA Jam** Acclaim Vivid Racing **Ubi Soft** Crime Killer Interplay Jersey Devil SCEA Mortal Kombat 4 Midway Wargames MGM Int. Tiger Wood & PGA Golf 98 EA Bio F.R.E.A.K.S. Midway Elric **Psygnosis** Populous: Third Coming Interplay Team Losi RC Racing Fox Int.

JULY

Bushido Blade 2 **SCEA** Carmageddon Interplay Cardinal Syn SCEA Exodus SCEA Gallop Racer Tecmo Heart of Darkness Interplay Tecmo's Deception II Tecmo NFL Xtreme **SCEA** Tomba! SCEA WWF Warzone Acclaim Acclaim Constructor Tomorrow Never Dies MGM Int. Pocket Fighter Capcom Vigilante 8 Activision

AUGUST

Alien Vs. Predator Fox Int.

Battleship Hasbro Int.

Brunswick Circuit Pro Bowling THQ

Sentinel Psygnosis

Kartia Atlus

Ninja Redneck Rampage 2 The Unholy War Psybadek Bassmasters Classic: TE Eidos Crave Ent. Crystal Dynamics Psygnosis TH-Q

SEPTEMBER

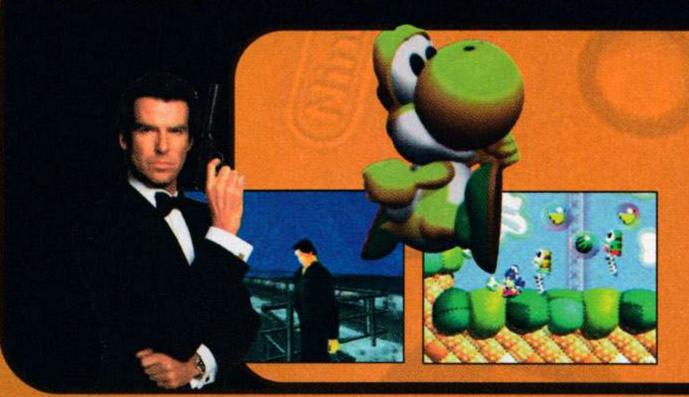
Carom Shot ASCII Ent. Shadowman Acclaim Tecmo Superbowl 2 Tecmo NFL Gameday '99 SCEA **Small Soldiers** EA Wild 9 Interplay Duke Nukem: Time to Kill GT Int. NFL Blitz Midway Darkstalkers 3 Capcom **Ubi Soft** Rayman 2 Return Fire II MGM Int. Madden NFL 99 EA Master of Monsters ASCII Ent. Hit Back ASCII Ent. Star Con Accolade Rebus Atlus Risk Hasbro Int. Messiah Interplay THQ Dead Unity Army Men 3D0 BLAM! Monkey Boy Parasite Eve Square L.A.P.D. 2100 AD EA NBA Live 99 EA NCAA Football 99 EA Spyro the Dragon **SCEA** Turbo Prop Racing SCEA

FOURTH QUARTER '98

Activision Heavy Gear Capcom Generations Vol I & II Capcom Tenchu Activision Rival Schools Capcom Crash 3: WARPED SCEA MediEvil SCEA Crystal Dynamics LOK: Soul Reaver ODT **Psygnosis** Working Designs Lunar: The Silver Star Story Croc II Fox Int. KOEI Soldnerschild ThrillKill Virgin Int. Dead in the Water **ASC Games** Akuji the Heartless Crystal Dynamics Enigma KOEI

The Top 10 Best Selling N64 Title

(Ranked on Units Sold March, 1998) . "Not in Top 10 Last Month . Source: NPD TRSTS Video Game Tracking Service



LAST MONTH	THIS MONTH	TITLE	PUBLISHER	
		Yoshi's Story	Nintendo	
2	2	Goldeneye 007	Nintendo	
3	3	Mario Kart 64	Nintendo	
100	4	Super Mario 64	Nintendo	
6	5	WCW vs. NWO: WT	THQ	
7	6	Diddy Kong Racing	Nintendo	
8	7	Wave Race 64	Nintendo	
4	8	Star Fox 64/Rumble Pak	Nintendo	
	g	1080 Snowboarding	Nintendo	
5	10	Star Wars: SOTE	Nintendo 	
		1080 Snowboarding	Nintendo	

The Top IO

Best Selling

ST MONTH	THIS MONTH	TITLE	PUBLISHER
1		Deer Hunter	Wizardworks
**	2	Deer Hunter: ES	Wizardworks
	3	Starcraft (CD W'95)	Sierra On-line
2	4	MYST (CD WIN)	Broderbund
M.	5	Titanic: J00T	Cyberllix
**	6	Star Wars Rebellion	LucasArts
7	7	Trophy Bass	Sierra Sports
	8	Wheel of Fortune	Imagesoft
**	9	Cabeta's Big Game Hunter	Head Games
4	10	MS Flight Simulator 98	Microsoft

Ranked on Units Sold March, 1998 • **Not in Top 10 Last Month

Source: The NPD Group - Soffrends

N64 Releases

Romance of the 3 Kingdoms V

JUNE

RPG Maker

Slipgroove

Superman

Monkey Hero

Tales of Destiny Respect, Inc.

Speed Tribes

Moto Racer 2

Metal Gear Solid

AC: Project Phantasma

Jeff Gordon Racing

Shao Lin Suikoden 2

Fighter Maker

Flying Dragon Natsume GT Racing Ocean Virtual Chess Titus Wetrix Ocean NBA Jam 98 Acclaim Titus Superman 64 THQ Quest 64 Chopper Attack Midway Mortal Kombat 4 Midway Banjo Kazooie Nintendo Off Road Challenge Midway Mission Impossible Ocean

ASCII Ent. ASCII Ent.

THQ

Konami Titus

ASCII Ent.

Take 2 Int.

Namco

EA

KOEI

Psygnosis THQ

Konami

ASC Games

Shaba Games

JULY

Tonic Trouble Ubi Soft
WWF Warzone Acclaim
Cruis'n World Nintendo

AUGUST

Caesar's Palace Crave Ent. Deadly Arts (G.A.S.P.) Konami Iggy's Reckin' Balls Acclaim Major League Soccer Acclaim Gex: Gecko 64 Crystal Dynamics Turok 2 Acclaim Robotech: Crystal Dreams Take 2 Int. World Grand Prix Video System

SEPTEMBER

Buck Bumble Ubi Soft
SimCopter 64 Maxis
Spacestation: Silicon Valley Take 2 Int.
S.C.A.R.S. Ubi Soft
Twisted Edge Snowboarding Midway
NFL Blitz Midway
Rayman 2 UbiSoft

3RD/4TH QUARTER RELEASES

In-Fisherman Bass Hunter 64 Take 2 Int. SF Rush 2 Midway Rats: Operation Scratch Mindscape C&C: Red Alert Westwood Zelda 64: Ocarina of Time Nintendo Crave Ent. VR Pool Fox Sports College Hoops '99 Fox F1 Racing Sim 2 **Ubi Soft** Milo's Bowl a Rama Natsume

PC Releases

JUNE

Bass Master: Tournament Edition THQ
Beast Wars Hasbro
Half-Life Sierra
Lode Runner 2 GT Int.
March Madness EA
Newman/Haas Racing Psygnosis

The Top 10

BEST SElling PSX

ST MONTH	THIS MONTH	TITLE	PUBLISHER
1		Resident Evil 2	Capcom
Market Street	2	Triple Play '99	EA
4	3	Crash Bandicoot	SCEA
1000	4	NBA Shoot Out '98	SCEA
2	5	WCW Nitro	THO
***	B .	March Madness '98	EA
5	7	NASCAR '98	EA MANAGEMENT OF THE STATE OF T
10 30	8	Tomb Raider	Eidos
6	9	NBA Live '98	EA
**	10	Twisted Metal	SCEA

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• Source: NPD TRSTS Video Game Tracking Service

Unreal	GT Int.
War Games	MGM Int.
WC Prophecy Mission Pack	EA
Falcon 4.0	Microprose
Cyberstorm 2 Corporate Wars	Sierra
Swat 2	Sierra
WarBirds 2.01	iMagic
Panzer '44	iMagic
ndustry Giant	iMagic
Seven Kingdoms Plus	iMagic
Vangers	iMagic

JULY

MIA GT Int.

Red Jack: Brethren THQ

Redline Accolade

Unreal Level Editor GT Int.

Vigilance Sega Soft

AUGUST

10-Six Sega Soft Brunswick Circuit Pro Bowling THQ C&C: Tiberian Sun Westwood Grim Fandango Lucas Arts Stratosphere Panasonic Redline Racer Ubi Soft The Unholy War Crystal Dynamics Unreal Add-on GT Int. Rainbow Six Red Storm

SEPTEMBER

Baldur's Gate Interplay
Chaos UbiSoft
Daikatana Eidos

H.E.D.Z. Tides of War S.C.A.R.S. Trans Am Racing **Tonic Trouble** Malkari Thief Road to Moscow **Speed Busters** Dead Unity NEOPHYTE UltraFighters Need for Speed III Spearhead Star Trek: Klingon Theocracy **Speed Tribes** Legend of Five Rings Vulcan Fury Powerslide Trickadelic Sanitarium Uprising X War of the Worlds Rayman 2 Jagged Alliance Heretic II F1 Racing Sim 2 Dark Vengeance Interstate '82 Star Trek: Starfleet Command Third World Rebel Moon Revolution

GT Int. **Ubi Soft** GT Int. UbiSoft *i*Magic **Eidos** *i*Magic **Ubi Soft** THQ Alien Software *i*Magic EA *i*Magic Microprose *i*Magic THQ Activision Interplay GT Int. UbiSoft **ASC Games** 3DO GT Int. Ubi Soft Sirtech Activision **Ubi Soft** GT Int. Activision Interplay Activision GT Int.

Hasbro

THE CELL



Reader reviews, reader art, and rabid ravings from our resident psycho...

YOU, TOO, CAN BE A WINNER!

How'd you like to win valuable prizes just for speaking your mind? Well, OK, maybe not really valuable prizes, but how about a free game? Here's all you have to do. Just send your stuff to Game Buyer 150 North Hill Drive, Brisbane, Ca 94005, c/o the proper department below, and wait! Now how hard is that?

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Send your artwork to Game Buyer Reader Art Don't forget to write your full name and address on the back of your picture!

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SAY WHAT?

Send your opinion to Game Buyer Say What? Or e-mail them to: bdonohue@ imaginemedia.com

READER TOP TEN

Send us your Top Ten favorite games and the system they're on to Game Buyer Top Ten Or watch for our Top Ten website, coming real soon!

shock treatment

Since this is the premiere issue of **Game Buyer**, I think maybe a little explanation of what this column is all about is in order. Every month, I'm going to pick a facet of the gaming

They gave Bill some space to rant and rave in, so he doesn't go off the Deep End...

industry that I think is patently ridiculous and then I'm going to get jiggy with it. Don't ask me why I just said 'Get jiggy with it'. Personally, I think it's a stupid saying and should be dropped from the vernacular. Besides, I have a sneaking suspicion that it might even be a racist statement. And another thing: what's with all these people who are going around saying 'It's all good'? Who was the moron who made that little gem up? Anyway, I think by now you're getting the idea behind this column. And if you're thinking 'Gee, that's nice. They gave Bill some space to rant and rave in, so he doesn't go off the deep end and start packing his shoes with sun-cured mayonnaise', you're absolutely right!

So let's get started, alright?
Websters defines the word
'peripheral' as 'a device connected to a computer as input or
output or auxiliary functions'. Of
course, for gamers, that trans-

lates into any one of the myriad control pads, joysticks, power gloves and other dubious devices that the videogame industry has tried to foist on the gaming public. Now while it is true that you

can't play a
game without
a control pad,
some of the
other devices

that are available definitely have their roots in the torture chambers of the Inquisition.

Case in point: a particular company, which shall remain nameless here, has come up with the brilliant idea for a device that 'galvanically stimulates the vestibular system'. What this means in plain English is that the device, which you put on your head like some 1950's Sci-fi alien helmet, shocks the hell out of your inner ear, so it feels like you're moving when you're not!

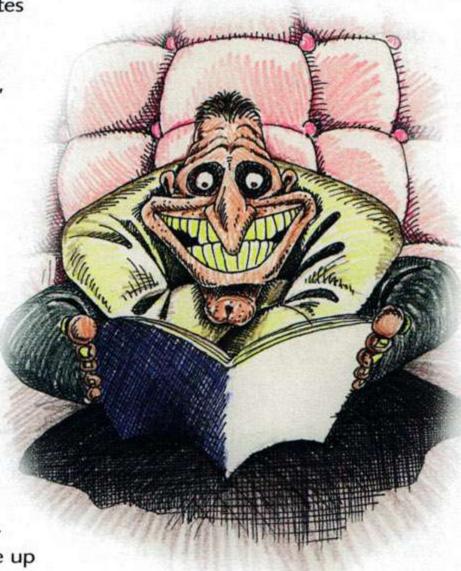
The only time I ever felt like I was moving when I wasn't was during an earthquake while suffering from a very savage hangover.
Let me tell you, it wasn't a pleasant experience at all! So who came up

with the idea that this might be a good thing?

Just imagine it: you're sitting at your PC, playing a flight sim, when suddenly you're jumped by a couple of bogeys. You break hard to the right, the ear zapper sends a jolt of current to your inner ear, and your stomach, which thinks you've just dropped 5000 feet, decides it's time to empty out all its contents before hitting the ground. Yeah, that mess will look just great on your keyboard.

But that's not the starkest

continued on page 161



medicine for the brain...

As a public service, Game Buyer's Bill Donohue offers his cure for that most common of gamer's maladies - the hangover.

- 1. Sleep as late as possible. Nothing can prepare you for the hell that is waking up early after a night of gaming and, of course, drinking!
 - 2. Eat a big, greasy breakfast.



READER'S TOP TEN

Resident Evil 2

This month's statement, made totally without thought to the

This month's statement, made totally without thought to the repercussions or violence it may cause, is:

'In ten years or less, the PC will render consoles extinct!'

I don't see this happening for the simple reason that a good quality PC that is needed to play most games costs about ten times as much as a

console. And since most people aren't going to spend 2000 dollars to play games, they'll buy a 200 dollar console. This is the most logical reason that consoles will continue to thrive well past the year 2000, or until a PC becomes affordable to everyone in North America.

Ted Bissell tbissell@gwi.net

I'm going to disagree. Not everyone can afford a PC and I'm sure in the next ten years the next generation consoles will have advanced technology like modems built in and other stuff. I don't think the consoles will be obsolete. They will be strong as ever; just as strong as the PC.

Mark Boyd markbw@earthlink.net

When you asked if consoles will be obsolete to the PC within ten years, I would have to say... neither. In fact, I truly believe that they will be actually integrated! Look at the facts today. There is more and more evidence that even the next generation of consoles is going to be interactive though the internet in one form or another, which is exactly where the pc is now. The two classes of systems will eventually merge into entertainment box sets, and work box sets! There... what do you think about that? William B. Mabe

mabe0002@onyx.mc.duke.edu

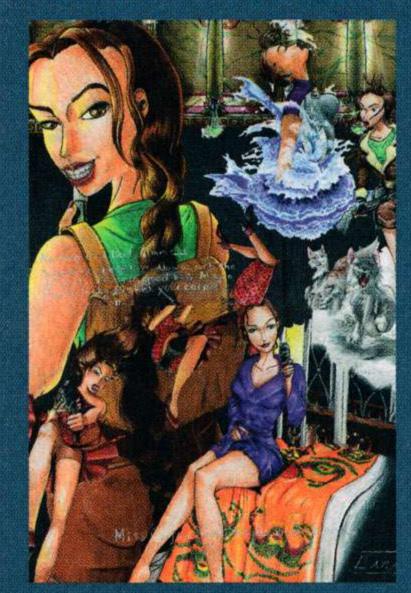
I hope not. I finally got a Nintendo 64. I've only got three games, but I want more. Of course, my Dad has a PC, too.

Tommy Chimienti lchimienti@aol.com

Next month's statement

Retro gaming and the use of 8-bit emulators on high end PCs is totally cool!

READER ART



Here's some great reader art! The artist would have won a free game, but they didn't write their name and address on the back of the pic.

Ballast is necessary for maintaining an even strain and reading Roger's copy without nausea. Pass the sausage!

3. Don't drink while gaming. Oh yeah... Sure... That's gonna work...

Goldeneye 007 NFL Gameday '98 Crash Bandicoot 2 Tomb Raider 2 **Diddy Kong Racing** Starcraft Quake II Pnzr. Dragoon Saga **NHL '98**

Game Buye

THE CELL

1080 Snowboarding

First, let me begin by saying that 1080 Snowboarding is truly the most impressive snowboarding game there is. The graphics are breath-taking! Such rich detail and awesome character animation can't be found in any other game of this type. The ice cold environment is so realistic, you can almost feel your skin go numb with frostbite as you soar down the hill, flakes of snow crashing into your screen. The beautiful,

> snowy skies and cool mountains give the term 'snow environment' a new meaning.

Speaking of realistic, the gameplay is extraordinary. There are six game modes available (adding immensely to the replay value). The first is Match Race and VS mode, in which you race head to head with the computer or a friend. Time Attack is a downhill slalom course or you can practice new tricks in Training mode's free-ride park and halfpipe. Contest and Trick

> Attack mode are where you perform tricks to earn more points. And what tricks!!! It almost feels like you're performing a 1080 degree spin yourself! There are eight snowboards to choose from, each with their own performance factors. The sound effects are pretty good, too. The jumps, landings, sliding, and scraping sound like they were recorded from the real thing.

The only downside to 1080 Snowboarding is the small amount of courses. There's six in all. though.

Top Gear Rally

Unlike most games, Top Gear Rally features an option that actually allows you to customize the decals on your car. The sad part is, this is about the only thing that puts this game above all the rest. The list of problems is worth reading.

The game's controls are so bad that moving the analog stick the slightest distance in any direction causes your car to veer from one side of the track to the other. The sound effects used in this game aren't too hot either. When your car skids, it produces a sound that can be likened to grinding one's teeth together. The only good sound effects are the music scores used in the game, so you might as well set your sound fx volume on minimum. Another bad thing is that when you do customize that decal on your car and save it to your memory pak, you might as well kiss that thing good-bye, because until you delete your saved decal, your memory pak will be almost on the useless list. Same thing goes with saving a ghost, which allows you to race against yourself.

On the plus side, if you truly like to see a twisted, mangled car, this is a game for you. At the end of each race, it will actually show you what your car looks like. Ever drive a Dodge Viper and at the end of your little ride have it resemble a Volkswagen Bug? Or an arrowhead?

There are different track settings for different seasons. There's sunny for summer, rainy for fall, and snowy for winter. You start out with access to one track and two cars, as you pass each season, you gain access to two more cars and one more track for each season.

If you really play this game for a while, and learn to master its controls which, believe me, is possible, this could actually amount to a good game, but still not one that you'd like to play 24-hours a day.

Chris Harpster charpster@hotmail.com



With Final Fantasy Tactics, Square has once again made another successful game to add to the RPG genre, and possibly the best RPG/Strategy game ever! I think this plays even better than Ogre Battle and resembles the gameplay of the Sega Genesis classic: Shining Force. The game takes place in a kingdom called Ivalice, where the royal family is corrupt with seduction, kidnapping, and murder!

The gameplay is great! The game was rumored to be 30 hours long, but with getting special characters like Agrias, Mustadio, Beowulf, and Cloud Strife (yes, THE Cloud Strife from Final Fantasy 7), I'd estimate the gameplay to last at least 50 hours, making this a very challenging and yet very cool game! The soundtrack is also superb. I think that this is second best to the soundtrack of Final Fantasy 7! The music also blends into some of the battles.

The game overall was fun, and it provided a challenge. The only downside to this was some bad spelling throughout the game (I.E. Ivalice was called Yvalice by Ramza's sister Alma) and I did not like the fact that you could not control the main character by yourself, but had to use a cursor to move him!

For strategy gamers who are looking for a real challenge, the graphics, soundtrack, and gameplay of Final Fantasy Tactics make this game a wise choice! ***

Mike Desjardins delita@radiant.net



Overall, 1080

Snowboarding is as close to reality as any videogame can get. And that's awesome! ****

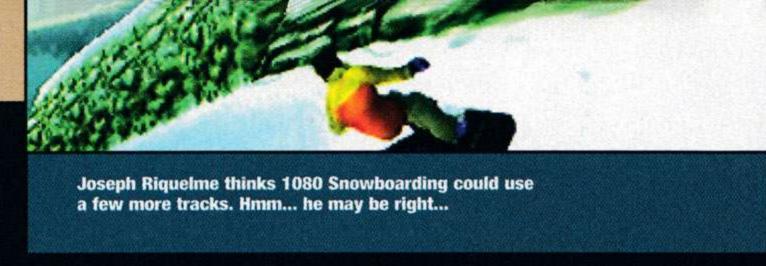
Joseph Riquelme Meister006@aol.com

BEST LAP

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LAP TIME

1'02"54





Dead or Alive

Has Sega given its precious Virtua Fighter series to Sony? No, but this is as close as it's going to get. Thanks to Tecmo, Playstation owners can have a taste of the mighty Model Two arcade board without buying a Saturn.

There are many similarities between DoA and Virtua Fighter. From the high resolution graphics, to the fighting engine itself, DoA screams Sega. Character selection is diverse, and Virtua Fighter fans are sure to find an almost exact copy of their favorite brawler.

It must be said that DoA has the greatest 'Bruce Lee' clone to date. While the Tekken series has Law, DoA has Jann Lee. From his yelps to the patented 'jumping chest break', Jann serves his purpose wonderfully. The remainder of the players range from an elderly man, with a drunken monkey fighting style, to the standard, big wrestler type. Here's a bit of trivia for you: the character Hayabusa is indeed the hero of Tecmo's Ninja Gaiden series. When talking about the characters, it is impossible to go without mentioning the 'bounce' factor. The rather 'gifted' female fighters have a nasty (or not so nasty) habit of bouncing as the fight goes on. Don't worry, though. This option may be turned off to appease parents of younger gamers, and other sensitive types.

Gameplay is similar to many current fighters, with a few standout features. The controls involve only three buttons, but this in no way takes away from the depth of the action. The three buttons are 'Punch', 'Kick', and 'Hold', and it is within the 'Hold' button that the game truly shines. With a tap, the 'Hold' button allows most any move to be countered or reversed. While it takes a bit of time to get used to, this feature results in some amazing matches, where counter flows into counter, giving fights a Judo match feel.

The true meat in the game comes from the numerous bonuses. The game contains two separate secret characters who, unlike the hidden characters of the Tekken series, are not repaints of the normal characters. Also, upon beating the game with default options, each character receives a new outfit. These range from wacky aliens to rather risque bikinis. Just waiting to see what comes next is reason enough to keep beating the game. Finally, there is the addition of the 'extra config' options in the option menu, which reveal more

All in all, Dead or Alive is a big winner. The lack of good endings is a disappointment, but the great gameplay more then makes up for that omission. Watch out, **Tekken 3!** The competition is right here!

Mark Gottlieb IGA @warwick.net

And the Winner is...

secrets as special goals are met.

This month's Winner for the best Reader Review is Mark Gottlieb! Congratulations, Mark! Your prize is on the way!



Here's one of those pictures that the Art Department puts in the mag because they like the way it looks. Beats me what the hell's going on here...

shock treatment

continued from page 158

horror this little beauty can conjure up. Since the device is controlled by impulses from your computer or gaming system, any kind of input can set it off. So let's say there's this little kid called Timmy. He's not real popular at school, but he's got a big high end game PC that his Dad got him, so the other kids will come over occasionally to play, but they still pick on him at school. It's kind of one of those 'best of both worlds' deal for the other kids, until Timmy's Dad brings home the Ear Zapper 2000...

Now Timmy is no dummy and he's also a big Quake 2 fan, so that means he's been programming his own levels for some time now. And Timmy figures it just might be time for a little revenge...

So the kids all come over and Timmy says he's designed a new level, but you have to wear this cool space helmet to play. He straps the first kid in and starts the game. Of course, what the poor sap doesn't know is that Timmy's programmed his level to administer a jolt of juice to his victim's ears every second. Soon the kid is twitching and scream-

ing, and all his friends think he's having a great time! Meanwhile, Timmy just stands back with a strange

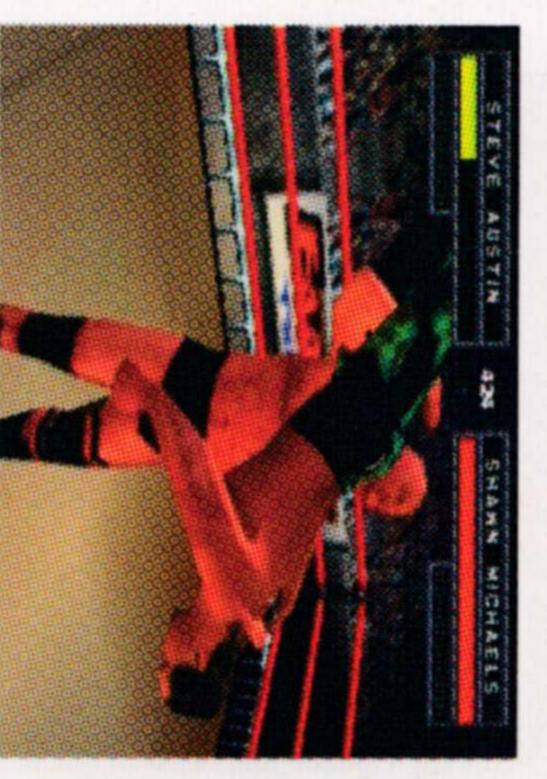
little smile on his face...

Where is all this craziness leading us? What's next? I know! How about a special new peripheral for the Alien vs. Predator game? It's fun and easy! All you have to do is turn on your PC and swallow the pleasant tasting Fantastic FunFetus 5000! the only peripheral that simulates giving birth to an alien baby! When a new alien is born in the game, the Fantastic FunFetus 5000 produces an electrical charge in your stomach, resulting in the most realistic alien labor pains you've ever felt! You'll swear you've had relations with a Face Hugger! You'll howl, you'll scream, you'll love it!

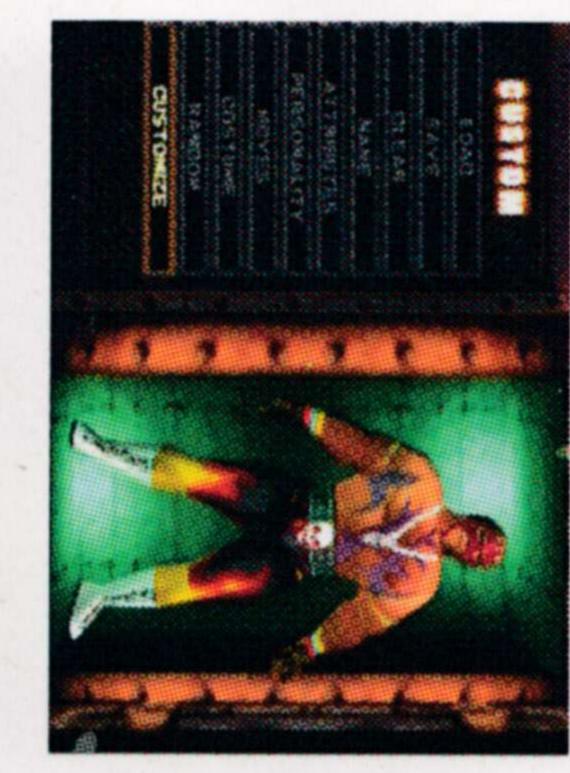
And don't forget to pick up our other great add-on: the Predator Puncture Pack! Why just stare at simulated onscreen gore, when you can strap on the Predator Puncture Pack and watch the blood gush? Only \$49.99... bandages not included...

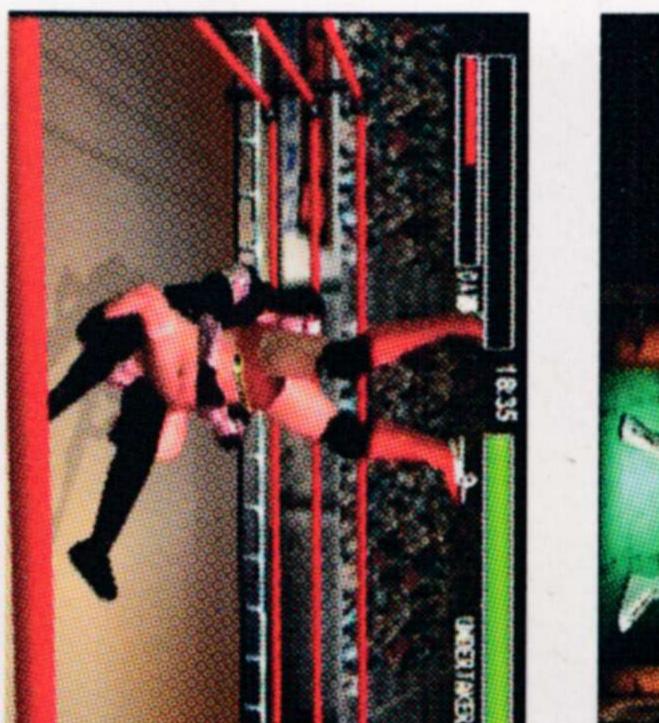






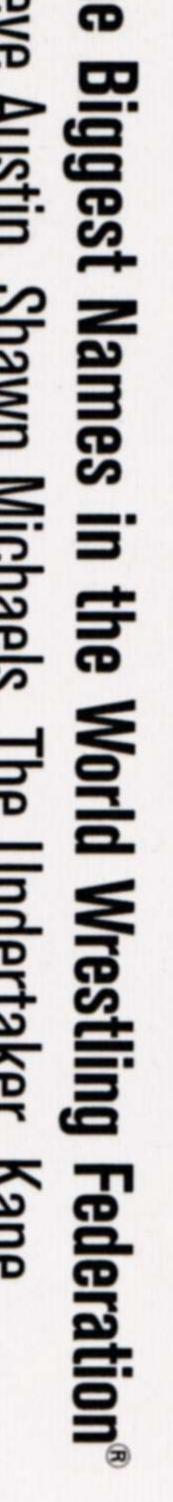












Steve Austin, Shawn Michaels, The Unuer Lancin, Steve Austin, Shawn Maivia, Triple H and more!

Photo-The Only Wrestling Game on N64 with 640 x 480 realistic polygonal wrestlers and 3-D environments.

Create-A-Wrestler

Customize a wrestler's gender, body, face, strength and costume.

Finishing and Over r 300 Motion Captured Maneuvers from the shing moves like "The Stone Cold Stunner" Shawn Michaels' "Sweet Chin Music."

Vince McMahon and Jim Ross bring you the action from ringside. The Only Professional Wrestling Game with 2-Man Commentary

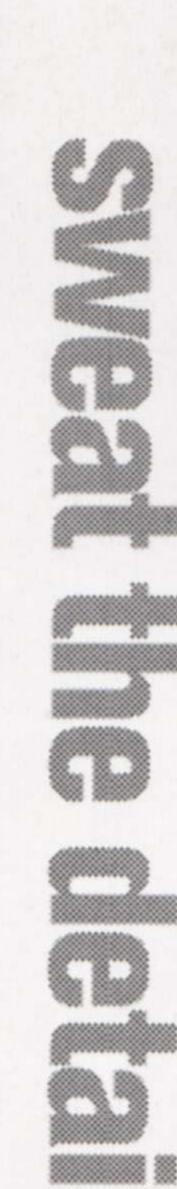
Wrestle in Multiple "True To The Ring" Matches

Steel Cage, Gauntlet, Weapons, Royal Rumble and 🜿 Challenge.

4-Player Action

One-9 One, Tag Team, Three-



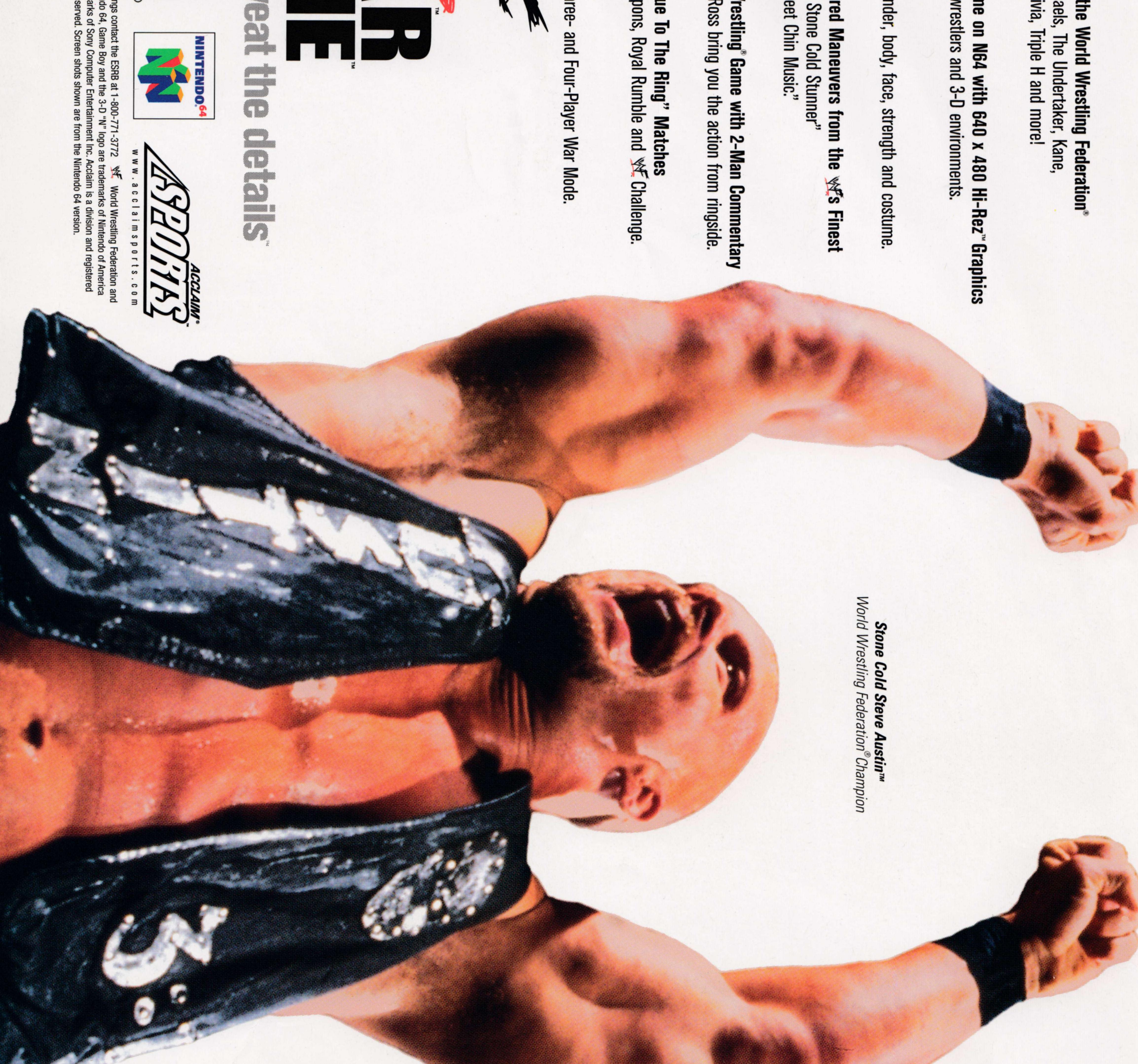




Also available on Game Boy.



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